English Translations of

Majmoo'al-Fatawa of late Scholar Ibn Bazz (R)

Second Edition

By:

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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The Book of Fasting

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Fasting is not an exclusive feature of the Islamic Community

Q: Is the month of Ramadan an exclusive feature of our Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed) only or it was also prescribed upon previous nations?

Answer: Allah (May He be exalted) states, ﴾O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴿ This Sacred Verse indicates that fasting is an ancient `Ibadah (worship) that was prescribed on those before us; however, were they obliged to fast in Ramadan or in other months? I do not know of any text about it from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

Regarding the merits of Ramadan and its special features, they are many. For example, Imam Ahmad reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾My nation was given in Ramadan five things that were not given to any previous nation: the bad smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk, the angels ask Allah to forgive those who fast till they breakfast, the rebellious Jinn (creatures created from fire) are in chains so that they could not move as they move before in other months

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Allah adorns His Paradise every day and says My righteous servants are about to deny themselves comforts and experience hardships and draw closer to Me. They are forgiven on the last night. It was said: Is it Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree)? He said, no but when workers complete their duties, they receive their wages.﴿

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) indicated that this is only for this Ummah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: ﴾Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith hoping for a reward from Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven. And whoever observes the Night Prayer during Ramadan, because of faith, expecting his reward from Allah, his previous sins will be forgiven. And whoever stands for in prayer on Laylat-ul-Qadr out of sincere Faith and hoping for the reward from Allah, all his previous sins will be forgiven."﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾Look for Laylat-ul-Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). ﴾Upon the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard), pray all the night, and keep his family awake for the Salah (prayer).﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

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I do not know of any specific Sunnah on the manner of welcoming the month of Ramadan

Q : Are there any prescribed ways of receiving Ramadan?

A: Ramadan is the best month of the year, as Allah (may He be Praised) made fasting in it an obligation and is the fourth pillar of Islam. The Muslims are also recommended to pray a special night prayer during the nights of this month. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: ﴾Islam was based on five pillars: testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (prayers), giving Zakah; fasting Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage).﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾He who observes the Night Prayer during Ramadan, because of faith and seeking his reward from Allah, his previous sins will be forgiven.﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

I do not know a specific manner to celebrate the beginning of Ramadan other than merely receiving it with happiness and pleasure. One should thank Allah for this blessing and allowing us to be alive to witness this month and compete in doing good deeds. Witnessing Ramadan is a great blessings from Allah; hence,

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the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) would give glad tidings to his companions when Ramadan started and explain its virtues and the reward Allah prepared for his fasting servants who offer night prayers. Muslims must receive this month with sincere repentance, preparing to fast, offering the night prayer with sincere intention and earnest will.

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3- Merit of fasting Ramadan and praying Qiyam during the nights

with explanation of important rulings that could be unknown

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to all Muslims, may Allah lead me and them in the path of believers, and guide me and them to deep comprehension of the Sunnah and the Qur'an, Amen!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

This is some brief advice concerning the Sawm (Fasting) of Ramadan, spending its nights in prayer, the virtue of competing to do good deeds in it, with an explanation of some important rulings that some people may not know.

It was authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he used to herald the glad tidings of the advent of the month of Ramadan to his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and inform them that all the doors of mercy and Paradise are opened in this month, the doors of Hell are closed, and devils are chained in fetters. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When it is the first night of the month of Ramadan, the devils and rebellious jinn are chained up and the gates of Hell are closed, and not one gate of it is opened. The gates of Paradise are opened, and not one gate of it is closed.

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And a caller cries out: 'O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist.' And Allah has those whom He redeems from the Fire, and that happens every night.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾There has come to you the month of Ramadan, a month of blessing, in which Allah covers you with grace, sending down mercy, forgiving sins and answering supplication. Allah looks at your competition in doing good therein, and boasts of you before His angels. So show Allah goodness from yourselves, for truly the wretched person is the one who is deprived of the Mercy of Allah during this month.﴿

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who fasts the month of Ramadan, out of Iman (Faith) and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Reward), will have their past sins forgiven. And anyone who spends the nights of Ramadan in Qiyam (optional Night Prayer), out of Iman and Ihtisab, will have their past sins forgiven. And anyone who spends Laylat-ul-Qadr in Qiyam, out of Iman and Ihtisab, will have their past sins forgiven.﴿

﴾Every good deed of the son of Adam would be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says: With the exception of Sawm (Fasting), for it is for Me and I shall reward for it; one abandons their desire and food for My Sake. The fasting person will have two joys: a joy at the time of Iftar (breaking the Fast), and a joy when they meet their Lord. And the mouth odor (of a fasting person) is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk.﴿

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There are many Hadiths indicating the merit of fasting Ramadan, praying Qiyam during its nights, and the merit of Sawm as an act of worship.

Therefore, believers must seize this opportunity to benefit from Ramadan, hasten to do good deeds and avoid sins, and do their best to fulfill the duties enjoined by Allah on them; especially the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers which are the Pillar of Islam and the greatest Faridah (obligatory act of worship) after the two Shahadahs (Testimonies of Faith). So every Muslim man and woman must keep performing them regularly on their due time with tranquility and Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship).

For men, one of the most important obligations of Salah is to offer it in congregation in the Masjid (mosque) which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His Name be glorified therein. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât, and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Râki'ûn.﴿ And: ﴾Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer – 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayer)].﴿ And: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ until the Ayahs saying: ﴾And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawât (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours).﴿ ﴾These are indeed the inheritors﴿ ﴾Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

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﴾The covenant between us and them is Salah; anyone who abandons it has committed Kufr (disbelief).﴿

The second most important Faridah after Salah is giving Zakah (obligatory charity) as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât, and that is the right religion.﴿ Also: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqamat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh).﴿ The Great Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His noble Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate that those who do not give the Zakah due on their wealth shall be punished for withholding it on the Day of Resurrection.

The most important matter after Salah and Zakah is to fast Ramadan as it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam mentioned in the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Islam is built on five (pillars): the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (Prayer), giving Zakah (obligatory charity); fasting Ramadan; and going on pilgrimage to the House (Ka'bah).﴿

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Muslims must protect their fasting and night praying during Ramadan against any words and deeds forbidden by Allah. By fasting, what is meant is to obey Allah (may He be Praised), honor the sacred Ordinances of Allah, struggle with oneself to go against its desires and obey its Lord; training it to be patient against committing what Allah has forbidden. It is not meant to only give up food, drink and

the rest of things that break Sawm. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Sawm (Fasting) is a shield; so when one of you is fasting they should not speak bad words or be boisterous, and if some person fights or insults them, let them say, 'I am a fasting person.'﴿ And: ﴾Whoever does not give up false speech (i.e. telling lies) and acting in accordance with it, and ignorant conduct, Allah has no need of them giving up their food and drink.﴿

Through these texts and others, it is learned that one who fasts must take care not to do what Allah forbids and be steadfast in doing what Allah has enjoined, hoping that Allah may forgive them, set them free from the Fire, and accept their fasting and night prayers.

As to the matters that people may not be aware of, they are as follows:

First among them: It is obligatory on the Muslim to fast out of sincere Iman and hope of reward from Allah; and not for showing off or to gain a reputation; or imitating people, or following the customs of one's own family or country. The only incentive that should really motivate one to fast is belief that Allah has made it obligatory and expectation of reward from the Lord. The same is true for praying Qiyam in Ramadan. A Muslim should perform it out of sincere Iman and hope of reward from Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who fasts the month of Ramadan, out of Iman (Faith) and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Reward), will have their past sins forgiven. And anyone who spends the nights of Ramadan in Qiyam (optional Night Prayer), out of Iman and Ihtisab, will have their past sins forgiven. And anyone who spends Laylat-ul-Qadr in Qiyam, out of Iman and Ihtisab, will have their past sins forgiven.﴿

Also among the matters that people may not know the ruling on them: The wounds, nosebleeds, or vomiting that a fasting person may experience during Sawm; or water or gasoline getting into the throat unintentionally, all these matters do not invalidate one's Sawm. However, whoever vomits deliberately, their fast will be invalidated as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Whoever vomits involuntarily is not required to make up the fast, but whoever vomits deliberately, must make up the missed fast.﴿

Another matter: The case of a fasting person who delays Ghusl (ritual bath following major ritual impurity)

till Fajr (Dawn), or a woman who delays bathing after her menstrual period or post-natal bleeding till the break of Fajr. If she sees that she has become pure (the bleeding has stopped) before Fajr, she must fast and it is permissible for her to delay Ghusl till after Fajr; but not till sunrise as she must bathe and offer Fajr Prayer before sunrise. The same applies to one who is Junub (in a state of major ritual impurity); they are not allowed to delay the Ghusl till after sunrise. They must perform Ghusl and offer the Fajr Prayer before sunrise. Men must hasten to bathe so that they can attend Fajr Prayer with the congregation.

Things that do not invalidate Sawm include: Blood tests and injections, but are non-inclusive of nutritional injections. However, if it is possible to delay these procedures till night, this is better and safer because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Leave that which causes you doubt for that which does not cause you doubt.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Anyone who guards against doubtful matters has protected their religion and honor.﴿

Further matters that people may not know the ruling on them:

It is required that one is tranquil while offering Salah, whether it is obligatory or supererogatory. All the Sahih (authentic) Hadiths reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate that tranquility is a Rukn (integral/Pillar) of Salah without which the Salah is invalid. This means calm immobility and Khushu' while performing Salah, and not to hasten until every joint returns to its natural position. Many people offer Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) while inattentive and distracted and without tranquility. They perform it quickly only pecking at the ground. The Salah performed this way is Batil (null and void), and the one who prays this way will not be rewarded for it.

Further matters that people may not know the ruling on them:

Some think that Tarawih Prayer should not be less than twenty Rak'ahs (units of Prayer). While others think it is not permissible to offer more than eleven or thirteen Rak'ahs, and all this is incorrect; it even contradicts textual evidence.

The Sahih Hadiths point out that Night Prayer is optional and has no certain limit of Rak'ahs that is not permissible to exceed. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer eleven Rak'ahs in the Night Prayer and sometimes offered thirteen Rak'ahs. Other times he (peace be upon him) offered less than that during Ramadan and at other times.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about Night Prayer, he said: ﴿Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).

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﴾ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify a certain number of Rak'ahs in Ramadan or at other times. For that reason, the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) sometimes offered during the time of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) thirty-three Rak'ahs and at other times eleven Rak'ahs. All that was authentically reported from 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and by the Sahabah during his time.

Some Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to offer during Ramadan thirty-six Rak'ahs and then offer three Rak'ahs as Witr. Others used to offer forty-one Rak'ahs. This was reported about them by the Shaykh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him), and by other scholars. He also mentioned that this is an optional matter and indicated that it is better for those who lengthen the recitation, bowing and prostration to lessen the number of Rak'ahs, while those who lighten (shorten) the recitation, bowing and prostration to increase the number of Rak'ahs. This is the meaning of his statement (may Allah have mercy on him).

If we contemplate the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), we will know that the best practice is to offer eleven Rak'ahs or thirteen Rak'ahs in Ramadan or at other times because this is what conforms to the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at most times. This is more considerate of the people who are being led in prayer and more helpful in achieving tranquility and Khushu'. If any one wishes to offer more, there is no blame or Karahah (reprehensibility).

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It is preferable for those who offer supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan not to leave the Masjid before the Imam leaves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Anyone who prays Qiyam (optional Night Prayer) with the Imam until he finishes, it will be recorded for him as spending the whole night

in prayer.》

Muslims are enjoined by Shari'ah (Islamic law) to do their best to worship Allah in this Holy Month by offering supererogatory prayer, reciting the Qur'an and contemplating it; glorify Allah as much as possible through Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"), Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]"), Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]"), Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), prescribed supplications, enjoying good and forbidding evil, calling people to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), consoling the poor and striving to please parents, maintaining ties of kinship, treating neighbors kindly, visiting the sick or other kinds deeds. As mentioned previously, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 《Allah looks at your competition in doing good therein, and boasts of you before His angels. So show Allah goodness from yourselves, for truly the wretched person is the one who is deprived of the Mercy of Allah during this month.》 The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 《Whoever seeks to draw closer to Allah during it (the month of Ramadan) by doing some good deed will be like one who does a Faridah (obligatory act of worship) at any other time, and one who does a Faridah (during Ramadan) will be like one who does seventy Faridahs at any other time.》

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: 《`Umrah (performed) in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj,' or he (peace be upon him) said, 'Hajj performed with me (in reward).'》

There are many Hadiths and Athars (narrations from the Companions) that urge us to compete in performing all kinds of good deeds in this Holy Month.

Allah is the One to be asked for guiding us and all Muslims to what pleases Him. May Allah accept our Sawm, Qiyam, improve our condition and protect us from misleading trials. We also ask Allah (may He be Praised) to make Muslim leaders righteous and unite their word upon the right. Only He is able to do that. As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

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Merits of Ramadan

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to all Muslims. May Allah guide us all to benefit from all good and hasten to perform good deeds, Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

O Muslims! You are in the great sacred month of Ramadan; the month of Sawm (Fast), Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night), and recitation of the Qur'an. In this month, Allah opens the door of forgiveness and sets His pious Servants free from the Fire. Ramadan is the month of giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity); a month in which the doors of Paradise are open, rewards of deeds are multiplied, hardships are removed, supplications are answered, ranks are elevated, and sins are forgiven. During this month, Allah (Glorified be He) provides His Servants with all kinds of bounties and showers His Awliya' (pious people) with blessings. A month in which Allah has made fasting it one of the pillars of Islam and in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed Sawm and commanded the people to do the same. He (peace be upon him) informed us that whoever observes Sawm in Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for Allah's Reward, their previous sins shall be forgiven; and that those who observe Qiyam-ul-Layl in Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for Allah's Reward, their previous sins shall be forgiven. In this month, there is one night that is better than thousand months. Muslims who deprive

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themselves of its good are really in loss. Honor this month, may Allah forgive you, by having good intentions, doing your best to observe Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, competing to do good, and repenting sincerely from all sins and misdeeds. Do your best to advise one another and cooperate in doing good and being pious. Advise one another to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and invite one another to every thing that is good to win dignity and great rewards.

Sawm has many benefits and great wisdom:

Some of these benefits are: Purifying one's soul; disciplining it; ridding it of bad traits and evil attributes, such as insolence, ingratitude, and miserliness; accustoming it to adopt good ethics, such as patience, forbearance, and generosity; and struggling to please Allah and draw closer to Him.

Other benefits of Sawm: It makes us know humble selves, our needs, our weaknesses and our dependence on our Lord. It reminds us of Allah's Blessings and of the needs of the poor; thus, driving us to be grateful to Allah (Glorified be He). We ought to employ Allah's Blessings in obeying Him and in consoling and helping our poor Muslim fellows. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) refers to these benefits in the following Ayah (Qur'anic verse): ﴿O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴾ Allah (Glorified be He) points out that

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Muslims are commanded to observe Sawm to fear Allah. This indicates that Sawm is a means to become pious and fear Allah as He should be feared. This is translated into obeying Allah and His Messenger by observing His Commands and Prohibitions out of sincere faith, love of Allah, fear of Him, and hope for His Reward. In this way, servants will be saved from Allah's Punishment and Wrath. Sawm is a manifest expression of piety that brings one closer to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). It is a sure way to make one fear Allah in all spiritual and worldly affairs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to some benefits of Sawm when he said: ﴾O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry should marry, for marriage helps him to lower his gaze and remain virtuous; and whoever is not able to marry is recommended to observe Sawm, for it (i.e. Sawm) diminishes the sexual drive.﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) indicated that Sawm diminishes one's sexual desire and is a way to help one remain pure and chaste. Satan runs in our bloodstream and Sawm narrows the veins and reminds one of Allah and His Greatness and, thus, the power of Satan diminishes and one's faith is strengthened. Sawm encourages good deeds and dissuades bad ones.

Other benefits of Sawm: It purifies the body of toxins, making one healthy and energetic, as confirmed by many physicians.

Sawm has helped physicians to cure many diseases. Allah (Glorified be He) states in the Qur'an that He has prescribed Sawm for us as He prescribed it for those before us. Allah (Glorified be He) points out that Muslims are obligated to observe Sawm in Ramadan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed that Sawm of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴿ ﴾a fixed number of days﴿ until Allah's Saying: ﴾The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴿

In the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim), it was reported on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Islam is based on five pillars: Testifying that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (Prayer), giving Zakah (obligatory charity); observing Sawm in Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage).﴿

O Muslims! Sawm is a good deed for which there is enormous reward, especially Sawm in Ramadan which Allah has made obligatory for

His Servants and made it a means to be granted success. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Every act of the son of Adam is for him; every good deed is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times except for Sawm, for it is exclusively for Me and it is I Who give reward for it. A person observing Sawm abandons their desires, food, and drink for My Sake. A person observing Sawm has two joyful occasions: one when

they break their Sawm and another when they meet their Lord. Indeed, the bad odor of the mouth of a person observing Sawm is more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk."﴾

It was reported in the Sahih Book of Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the month of Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of the Fire are closed, and the devils are chained.﴾ Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Majah related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾On the first night of (the month of) Ramadan, the devils and rebellious Jinn (creatures created from fire) are chained up; the gates of Paradise are opened and not one of its gates is closed; and the gates of the Fire are closed and not one of its gates is opened. A caller cries out: 'O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist.' And Allah redeems whom He wills from the Fire, and this takes place each night.﴾

On the authority of `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Ramadan came to you as a month of blessing in which Allah spreads His Mercy, forgives sins,

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and answers supplications. Allah (may He be Exalted) sees your competition and speaks proudly of you to the angels. So show Allah that you are doing good as the deprived one is he who deprives himself of Allah's Mercy (in this month).﴾ (Related by Al-Tabarany) On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah has enjoined you to fast the month of Ramadan and I have made it a Sunnah (a commendable act) for you to observe Qiyam-ul-Layl during it. Whoever observes Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl during its nights out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), they will emerge as sinless as a new-born child.﴾ (Related by Al-Nasa'y)

Qiyam-ul-Layl in Ramadan has no specified number of Rak`ahs (units of Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify a certain number of Rak`ahs for Muslims, but urged them to observe Qiyam-ul-Layl without specifying a set number of Rak`ahs. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about Qiyam-ul-Layl, he said: ﴾(The night Prayer is offered as) two Rak`ahs followed by two Rak`ahs, and so on. If anyone fears the approach of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, they should offer one Rak`ah and this will be a Witr for all the Rak`ahs which they offered before.﴾ (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahih) This indicates that the issue is flexible. It is permissible to offer twenty Rak`ahs and then conclude with three Rak`ahs as Witr. Likewise, it is permissible to offer ten Rak`ahs and conclude with three Rak`ahs as Witr and it is permissible to offer eight Rak`ahs and conclude with

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three Rak`ahs as Witr. It is permissible to increase or decrease the number of Rak`ahs, but it is preferable to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He used to offer eight Rak`ahs, saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after each pair of Rak`ahs, and then conclude with three Rak`ahs as Witr while observing tranquility, solemnity, and Tartil (slow recitation of the Qur'an). It was authentically reported in the Two Sahih on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she narrated: ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did not offer more than eleven Rak`ahs in Ramadan or at any other time. He used to offer four (Rak`ahs), but do not ask how excellent and long they were. Then he would offer four (Rak`ahs), but do not ask how excellent and long they were. And then he would offer three (Rak`ahs).﴾

It was reported in the Two Sahih on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer ten Rak`ahs at night. He would say Taslim

after every two (Rak`ahs) and end them by offering one (Rak`ah) as Witr.)

It was also authentically reported in other Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed Qiyam-ul-Layl with less number of Rak`ahs. It was also authentically reported that he

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(peace be upon him) offered thirteen Rak`ahs on some nights, saying Taslim after each pair of Rak`ahs. These authentic Hadith indicate that there is no specific number of Rak`ahs for observing Qiyam-ul-Layl. This is from Allah's Mercy, making things easy for His Servants, so that every Muslim can do what they are able to do during Ramadan and other months as well.

Muslims should know that it is prescribed, when observing Qiyam-ul-Layl in Ramadan or offering any other Salah (Prayer), to offer Salah with tranquility and submissiveness when standing, bowing, prostrating and reciting the Qur'an. One must not rush as the heart of Salah is to offer it as Allah has commanded us to offer it, that is, be sincere and submissive, hope for Allah's Reward, fear Him, and have an attentive heart. Allah (may He be Glorified says: (Successful indeed are the believers.) (Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (My utmost pleasure is Salah.) He (peace be upon him) said to one who did not offer his Salah properly: (When you get up to offer Salah, perform Wudu' (ablution) properly and then face the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) and say Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), then recite what you know from the Qur'an and then bow down

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until you feel at ease, then rise from bowing until you stand erect, then prostrate calmly (and remain in prostration) until you feel at ease, then raise (your head) and sit calmly until you feel at ease, then prostrate calmly (and remain in prostration) until you feel at ease, then raise (your head) and sit calmly until you feel at ease in the sitting position, and do likewise throughout the entire Salah.)

Many people who observe Qiyam-ul-Layl in Ramadan do so without contemplation or tranquility. Rather, they only hit the ground and this is not permissible. It is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and renders Salah null and void since tranquility is a pillar in Salah as evidenced by the abovementioned Hadith. Hence, it is a must to be mindful of this. It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The worst of thieves is one who steals from their Salah. They said, "O Messenger of Allah! How do they steal from their Salah?" He replied, "They do not perform Ruku` (bowing) or Sujud (prostration) properly.")

It was also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded the one who knocked the ground while performing his Salah in haste to repeat it. O Muslims! Glorify your Salah by performing it as Allah commands; and seize the opportunity to gain every benefit from this great month by performing good deeds and all forms of worship.

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Hasten to obey Allah as it is a great month in which Allah gives His Servants a chance to compete in doing good deeds in obedience to Him. May Allah forgive you and have mercy on you! Offer as much Salah as you can, give Sadaqah, recite the Qur'an with contemplation and thought, glorify Allah, praise Him, say Takbir and Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]") and ask Allah for forgiveness. Send peace and blessings to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as much as you can and do good to the poor, needy, and orphans. Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)

was the most generous of all people and was even more generous during Ramadan. So follow in his footsteps, may Allah have mercy on you, by increasing your Sadaqah and good deeds in Ramadan. Help your poor brothers to observe Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, and hope for Allah's Reward, the King and All-Knower. Guard your Sawm from what Allah forbids. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever does not give up false speech and acting accordingly, Allah does not need them to leave their food and drink.﴾ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴿Sawm is a shield (from the fire and from committing sins). When one of you is observing Sawm, he should avoid intimate relations (with his wife) and quarreling, and if someone insults him, he should say, 'I am observing Sawm.'﴾

It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Sawm is not abstinence from food and drink, but (true) Sawm is abstinence from empty talk and bad language.﴾

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Ibn Hibban reported in his Sahih Book of Hadith on the authority of Abu Sa`id (may Allah be pleased with him) who narrated that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever observes Sawm in Ramadan, knows its ordinances and observes what should be observed during it will have all their previous sins forgiven.﴾

Also, Jabir ibn `Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with them) said: ﴿When you observe Sawm, let your ears, eyes and tongue abstain from lying and other unlawful acts. Do not harm your neighbors. Be characterized by humility and calmness. Let there be a difference between the days of observing Sawm and the days when you are not observing Sawm.﴾

Among the matters which Muslims should maintain are the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. Muslims are obligated to offer them on time during Ramadan and other months. Salah is the foundation of Islam and the greatest pillar after the Shahadah (Testimony of Faith). Allah has made it great and mentioned it repeatedly in His Book. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].﴾ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴿And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh).﴾

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There are many Ayahs in this regard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿That which differentiates us from them (i.e. disbelievers and hypocrites) is our performance of Salah. Anyone who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.﴾ It was authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever observes Salah, it will be a light and a proof saving them on the Day of Resurrection; and whoever does not observe it, it will not be a light, a proof, or a salvation for them. On the Day of Resurrection, they will be with Pharaoh, Haman, Qarun, and Ubayy ibn Khalaf. ﴾

One of the most important obligations for men with respect to Salah is that they are obligated to offer it in congregation. It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever hears the call (i.e. Adhan) and does not come to it (i.e. Salah), there is no Salah for him except with an excuse.﴾ ﴿A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "My home is very far from the mosque and I find no one to lead the way for me. Is it permissible for me to offer Salah at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, "Do you hear the call to Salah?" The blind man said, "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Then you must respond."》 (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

Also, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 《I have seen the time when no one failed to attend it (i.e. Salah), except a hypocrite who was well known for his hypocrisy.》 So fear Allah, O Servants of Allah! Observe offering Salah in congregation and advise one another to do so in Ramadan and in other months as well to be granted forgiveness, have your rewards multiplied, be saved from Allah's Wrath and Punishment; and differ from Allah's enemies from among the hypocrites.

Zakah is the most important act of `Ibadah (worship) after Salah. It is the third pillar of Islam and is always mentioned together with Salah in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). So glorify it as Allah made it glorious and hasten to pay it when it is due for those who deserve it out of sincere faith, generosity, and gratitude to Allah Who bestows His Blessings on you.

Know that Zakah purifies you and your money and is a way to thank Allah Who has provided you with money. It is a way to console your poor brothers. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: 《Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it》 Allah

(Glorified be He) also says: 《Work you, O family of Dâwûd (David), with thanks!" But few of My slaves are grateful.》 The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed Mua`dh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him), when he sent him to Yemen, saying: 《You will go to a community of the People of the Book, so first call them to testify that there is no deity except Allah, and that I (Muhammad) am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept this, tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five Prayers during the day and night. If they accept that, tell them that Allah has made Zakah obligatory for them that it should be collected from the wealthy and distributed among the poor. If they agree to this, do not take (as a share of Zakah) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between it and Allah.》 (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In this month, Muslims should be generous and spend as much as they can, paying much attention to the poor and those who do not ask for charity. Muslims should help them observe Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, following the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to please Allah (Glorified be He) and as a way of thanking Him for His Blessings. Allah (Glorified be He) has promised His Servants who spend a great reward and many children. Allah (Glorified be He) says: 《And whatever good you send before you for yourselves, (i.e. Nawâfil non-obligatory acts of worship: prayers, charity, fasting, Hajj and 'Umrah), you will certainly find it with Allâh, better and greater in reward.》 Allah (Exalted be He) also says:

《and whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allâh's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of providers.》 Beware, may Allah grant you mercy, any sins that might affect your Sawm negatively, diminish your reward, or incur Allah's Wrath such as usury, adultery, theft, murder without justification, unjust consumption of the property of orphans; and all forms of injustice against persons, money, or honor. You should also avoid cheating in dealings, not keeping trusts, being ungrateful to parents, and severing ties of kinship. Enmity and hostility without a just cause; intoxicants and drugs, such as hashish and tobacco; backbiting and slander, lying, false testimony,

false claims, and perjury should all be avoided. Men should not shave or cut off their beards, allow their moustaches to grow long, act pridefully, or make Isbal (lengthening and trailing clothing below the ankles). Muslims should not listen to songs and music. Muslim women should abstain from Tabarruj (dressing immodestly in violation of the Islamic dress code) and imitating disbelieving women in wearing revealing clothes or others things that Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have forbidden.

These sins are forbidden at all times and all places, but are more forbidden during Ramadan and more grievous because of the sanctity of this month. O Muslims! You must fear Allah and avoid what He and His Messenger have forbidden. Be steadfast in obeying Allah in Ramadan and in other months as well, advise one another to do that. Enjoin others to do good and forbid evil to gain honor, happiness, and dignity, and to be saved

in this world and in the Hereafter. May Allah protect you, us, and all Muslims from that which brings His Wrath! May Allah accept our Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl and rectify the affairs of Muslim rulers and make them a means to defend Islam and defeat His enemies! May Allah guide us all to comprehend Islam, hold fast to it, and judge according to it in all our affairs! Allah has power over all things.

Peace be upon His Servant and Messenger, Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions and whoever follows his way until the Day of Resurrection. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

President of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

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Benefits and great wisdom of Sawm

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to all Muslims, may Allah guide us all to benefit from all good and hasten to perform good deeds. Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

O Muslims! You are in the great sacred month of Ramadan; the month of Sawm (Fast) and Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night). In this month, Allah opens the door of forgiveness and sets His Pious Servants free from the Fire. Ramadan is the month of giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity); a month in which the doors of Paradise are open, rewards of deeds are multiplied, hardships are removed, supplications are answered, ranks are elevated, and sins are forgiven. During this month, Allah (Glorified be He) provides His Servants with all kinds of bounties and showers His Awliya' (pious people) with blessings. A month in which Allah has made fasting it one of the pillars of Islam and in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed Sawm and commanded the people to do the same. He (peace be upon him) informed us that whoever observes Sawm in Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for Allah's Reward, their previous sins shall be forgiven; and that those who observe Qiyam-ul-Layl in Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for Allah's Reward, their previous sins shall be forgiven. In this month, there is one night that is better than thousand months. Muslims who deprive

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themselves of its good have been deprived of all good. Welcome this month with happiness, be determined to observe Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, compete to do good, and repent sincerely from all sins and misdeeds. Do your best to advise one another and cooperate in doing good and being pious. Advise one another to enjoin good and forbid evil, and invite one another to everything that is good to win dignity and great rewards.

Sawm has many benefits and great wisdom:

Some of these benefits are: Purifying one's soul; disciplining it; ridding it of bad traits and evil attributes, such as insolence, ingratitude, and miserliness; accustoming it to adopt good ethics, such as patience, forbearance, and generosity; and struggling to please Allah and draw closer to Him.

Other benefits of Sawm: It makes us know our humble selves, our needs, our weaknesses and our dependence on our Lord. It reminds us of Allah's Blessings and of the needs of the poor; thus, driving us to be grateful to Allah (Glorified be He). We ought to employ Allah's Blessings in obeying Him and in consoling and helping our poor Muslim fellows. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) refers to these benefits in the following Ayah (Qur'anic verse): ﴾O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) points out that

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Muslims are commanded to observe Sawm to fear Allah. This indicates that Sawm is a means to become pious and fear Allah as He should be feared. This is translated into obeying Allah and His Messenger by observing His Commands and Prohibitions out of sincere faith, love of Allah, fear of Him, and hope for His Reward. In this way, servants will be saved from Allah's Punishment and Wrath. Sawm is a manifest expression of piety that brings one closer to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). It is a sure way to make one fear Allah in all spiritual and worldly affairs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to some benefits of Sawm when he said: ﴾O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry should marry, for marriage helps him to lower his gaze and remain virtuous; and whoever is not able to marry is recommended to observe Sawm, for it (i.e. Sawm) diminishes the sexual drive.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) indicated that Sawm diminishes one's sexual desire and is a way to help one remain pure and chaste. Satan runs in our bloodstream and Sawm narrows the veins and reminds one of Allah and His Greatness and, thus, the power of Satan diminishes and one's faith is strengthened. Sawm encourages good deeds and dissuades bad ones.

There are other benefits of Sawm that are clear for any insightful person; among which is that Sawm purifies the body of toxins, making one healthy and energetic, as confirmed by many physicians.

Sawm has helped physicians to cure many diseases. There are many Ayahs and texts of Hadith that indicate the benefits and merits of Sawm and that it is prescribed for Muslims. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴿ ﴾a fixed number of days﴿ until Allah's Saying: ﴾The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴿

In the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim), it was related on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Islam is based on five pillars: Testifying that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (Prayer), giving Zakah (obligatory charity); observing Sawm in Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage).﴿ It was related in the Sahih on the authority of Amir Al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Believers) `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that Jibril (Gabriel - peace be upon him be peace) asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about Islam and he (peace be upon him) replied: ﴾It is to testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to offer Salah, to give

Zakah, to observe Sawm in Ramadan, and to perform Hajj if you can afford it (i.e. physically and financially). He (i.e. Jibril) said: You have spoken the truth. He then asked: Inform me about Iman (Faith/belief). Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His

Books, His Messengers, the Last Day; and to believe in Divine Decree, whether good or evil. He (i.e. Jibril) said: Inform me about Ihsan. He (peace be upon him) replied: It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and although you do not see Him, He certainly sees you.) This is a great Hadith that we need to contemplate and comprehend its meanings.

Al-Tirmidhy related on the authority of Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) that he narrated: (I said: O Allah's Messenger! Inform me of an act which will cause me to be admitted into Paradise and keep me away from the Fire. He replied, "You have asked me about a serious matter, yet it is an easy matter for him for whom Allah makes it easy. Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, observe Salah, pay Zakah, observe Sawm during Ramadan, and perform Hajj to the House of Allah if you are able to make the journey." He, then, said: Shall I not guide you to the gates of goodness: Sawm is a shield (against sins); Sadaqah extinguishes sins as water extinguishes fire; and a man's Salah in the middle of the night. Then he (peace be upon him) recited: (Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allâh's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.) (No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.) Then, he (peace be upon him) said:

Shall I inform you of the peak of the matter, its pillar, and its topmost part? I replied: Certainly O Messenger of Allah. He said: The peak of the matter is Islam, its pillar is Salah and its topmost part is Jihad (fighting/striving in the Cause of Allah). Then, he (peace be upon him) said: Shall I not tell you of the thing which controls all that? I said: Yes, Messenger of Allah. He took hold of his tongue and said: Restrain it. I asked: O Messenger of Allah, will be held accountable for what we say? He replied: May your mother lose you! Mu`adh, Is there anything that topples people on their faces (or he said, on their noses) into the Fire other than the jests of their tongues?)

O Muslims! Sawm is a good deed for which there is enormous reward, especially Sawm in Ramadan which Allah has made obligatory for His Servants and made it a means to be granted success. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Every act of the son of Adam is for him; every good deed is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says, "Except for Sawm, for it is exclusively for Me and it is I Who give reward for it. A person observing Sawm abandons their desires, food, and drink for My Sake. A person observing Sawm has two joyful occasions: one when they break their Sawm and another when they meet their Lord. Indeed, the bad odor of the mouth of a person observing Sawm is more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk.") It was related in the Two Sahih Books of Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him)

said: (When the month of Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of the Fire are closed, and the devils are chained.) Also, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Majah related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (On the first night of (the month of) Ramadan, the devils and rebellious Jinn (creatures created from fire) are chained up; the gates of Paradise are opened and not one of its gates is closed; and the gates of the Fire are closed and not one of its gates is opened. A caller cries out: 'O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist.' And Allah redeems whom He wills from the Fire, and this takes place each night.)

It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give glad tidings to his Sahabah (Companions) for the start of Ramadan, saying: (Ramadan has come filled with blessings, and it is welcomed as an honorable visitor.)

Also, Ibn Khuzaymah related on the authority of Salman Al-Farisy (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the people on the last day

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of Sha`ban, saying: ﴾O people! A great month has come to you; a blessed month; a month in which there is a night better than a thousand months; a month in which Allah has made its Sawm Faridah (obligatory act) and its Qiyam-ul-Layl a supererogatory act. Whoever draws nearer (to Allah) by performing any of the (optional) good deeds (in this month) shall receive the same reward as performing a Faridah at any other time, and whoever performs a Faridah (in this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy Faridahs at any other time. It is the month of patience, and the reward of patience is admittance into Paradise. It is the month of consolation, and a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased.﴿

O Muslims! Seize the opportunity to gain every benefit from this great month by performing good deeds and all forms of worship. Hasten to obey Allah as it is a great month in which Allah gives His Servants a chance to compete in doing good deeds in obedience to Him. May Allah forgive you and have mercy on you! Offer as much Salah as you can, give Sadaqah, recite the Qur'an, and do good to the poor, needy, and orphans.

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was the most generous of all people and was even more generous during Ramadan. So follow in his footsteps by doubling your Sadaqah and good deeds in Ramadan. Help your poor brothers to observe Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, and hope for Allah's Reward, the King and All-Knower. Guard your Sawm from what Allah forbids.

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It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever does not give up false speech and acting accordingly, Allah does not need them to leave their food and drink.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Sawm is a shield (from the fire and from committing sins). When one of you is observing Sawm, he should avoid intimate relations (with his wife) and quarreling, and if someone insults him, he should say, 'I am observing Sawm.'﴿ It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Sawm is not abstinence from food and drink, but (true) Sawm is abstinence from empty talk and bad language.﴿

Jabir ibn `Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "When you observe Sawm, let your ears, eyes and tongue abstain from lying and other unlawful acts. Do not harm your neighbors. Be characterized by humility and calmness. Let there be a difference between the days of observing Sawm and the days when you are not observing Sawm.

A person observing Sawm should recite the Qur'an as much as possible, contemplate it, and comprehend it. They must offer Salah as much as they can, give Sadaqah, observe Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), ask Allah for forgiveness, and observe the means that draw closer to Allah during the day and night, hoping for multiple rewards and for gaining the pleasure of Allah, the Lord of the heavens and earth. Every Muslim must avoid what negatively affects Sawm, diminishes one's reward, and incurs Allah's Wrath,

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such as neglecting Salah, not paying Zakah, dealing in usury, consuming orphans' properties, being unjust, stealing, being undutiful to parents, severing the ties of kinship, backbiting, slandering, lying, giving false testimony, circulating false claims, and committing perjury. Men should not shave or cut

off their beards or allow their moustaches to grow long. Muslims should not listen to songs and music and women should abstain from Tabarruj (dressing immodestly in violation of the Islamic dress code) and imitating disbelieving women in wearing revealing clothes or others things that Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have forbidden. These sins are forbidden at all times and all places, but are more forbidden during Ramadan and more grievous because of the sanctity of this month.

O Muslims! You must fear Allah and avoid what He and His Messenger have forbidden. Be steadfast in obeying Allah in Ramadan and in other months as well, advise one another to do that to gain honor, happiness, and pride, and to be saved in this world and in the Hereafter. May Allah protect us all from that which brings His Wrath, accept our Sawm and Qiyam-ul-Layl, rectify the affairs of Muslim rulers and make them a means to defend Islam and defeat His enemies. May Allah guide us all to comprehend Islam, hold fast to it, and judge according to it in all our affairs. Allah has power over all things. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Vice President of the Islamic University in Madinah

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

A word on celebrating the beginning of Ramadan

Q: What is the word you would like to direct to the Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed) on the occasion of Ramadan?

A: In the Name of Allah. All Praises be to Allah. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, companions, and those who follow him. To proceed:

I advise my Muslim brothers everywhere on the occasion of the beginning of Blessed Ramadan 1413 A.H. to fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), compete to do good, advise one another to do what is right, and be patient in this regard. Cooperate to do the good and be pious, be careful to avoid what Allah forbids everywhere, especially in this sacred Month as it is a month in which good deeds are multiplied in reward, and sins are forgiven. If one fasts and observes night prayer believing in Allah and expecting His Reward as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ("Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven".) and ("When the month of Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are

opened and the gates of the (Hell) Fire are closed, and the devils are chained." ❩ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said:

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❨Fasting is a Junnah (i.e. shield or protection from the fire and from sins), so when one of you is fasting, he should avoid intimate relations with his wife and quarreling. And if someone should fight or quarrel with him, he should say, 'I am fasting'.❩ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ❨Allah (the Exalted) states: "Every act of the son of Adam is for him; every good deed is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times except for fasting, for it is exclusively for Me and it is I who give reward for it. A fasting person leaves his desire, food and drink for My sake; hence, a fasting person has two joyful occasions: One when he breaks his fast, and another when he meets His Lord. Indeed, the odor emitting from the mouth of a fasting person is more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk."❩ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) congratulated his companions on the arrival of Ramadan and said, ❨Verily, the month of Ramadan has come to you all. It is a blessed month in which He sends His Mercy, obliterates sins, and accepts your supplication. In this blessed month, Allah looks at your competition in worship and praises you to the angels, so show your Lord the best deeds that you can offer. The unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's Mercy in this blessed month.❩

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ❨"Whoever does not give up false statements (i.e. telling lies), evil deeds, and speaking bad words to others, Allah is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink."❩ Related by Al-Bukhari and his Sahih. There are many hadiths on the virtues of Ramadan urging one to perform good deeds which are doubled during this sacred month.

I advise my Muslim brothers to keep on the right path during its days and nights and to compete in doing good deeds such as reciting

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the Qur'an as much as possible with contemplation; recite Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"); and Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]"); and Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]"); and Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), and imploring Allah to admit us into Paradise, keep us away from Hell, etc. of the other good supplications.

I also advise my brothers to give a lot in charity and support the poor and needy. You should take care of paying Zakah to those who deserve it, invite to Allah (may He be Praised), educate the ignorant, enjoin what good, and forbid what is evil with wisdom and in good way. Avoid all bad deeds, repent, and be on the right path as Allah (may He be Praised) states, ❨And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful❩ - ❨Verily, those who say: "Our Lord is (only) Allâh," and thereafter stand firm and straight on the Islâmic Faith of Monotheism, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.❩ ❨Such shall be the dwellers of Paradise, abiding therein (forever) - a reward for what they used to do.❩

May Allah guide us all to what pleases him and keep us away from misleading trials and whisperings of devils. Allah is All-Generous, All-Bountiful.

7- A piece of advice on the occasion of welcoming the month of Ramadan

Q : Your Eminence, what is your advice to Muslims as we prepare to receive this sacred month?

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A : I advise all Muslims to fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and to receive this great month with sincere repentance from all sins and to understand more about their Din (religion). One must learn the rulings of fasting and night prayer as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ("If Allah wants to do good to a person, He grants him understanding of Islam.") The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (When the month of Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of the (Hell) Fire are closed, and the devils are chained.)

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (On the first night of the month of Ramadan, the gates of Hell are closed, the gates of Paradise are opened and the devils and rebellious jinn are chained up. And a caller cries out: 'O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist. And Allah has those whom He redeems from the Fire, and that occurs every night.)

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also said to the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet): (Ramadan came to you as a month of blessings in which Allah showers His Mercy upon you, obliterates sins from your records,

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and responds to supplications - so show good deeds to Allah as the deprived person is the one who is deprived of Allah's Mercy.) The meaning of (So show good deeds to Allah) is to hasten to do good deeds, obey Him, and refrain from misdeeds.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: (Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his past sins will be forgiven; and whoever observes the Night Prayer during Ramadan, because of faith and seeking his reward from Allah, his previous sins will be forgiven; and whoever stands in the prayer on the Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree) out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.")

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (Allah (the Exalted) states: "Every act of the son of Adam is for him; every good deed is multiplied from ten to seven hundred

times except for fasting, for it is exclusively for Me and it is I who give reward for it. A fasting person leaves his desire, food, and drink for My sake; thus a fasting person has two joyful occasions: One when he breaks his fast, and another when he meets His Lord. Indeed, the unpleasant odor of the mouth of the fasting person is better, in the sight of Allah, than the smell of musk.") The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (

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On a day that anyone of you is fasting, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise his voice. If anyone abuses him or tries to fight with him, he should say: 'I am fasting'.) Also, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ("Whoever does not give up false statements (i.e. telling lies), and evil deeds, and speaking bad words to others, Allah is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink.") Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih.

So I advise all Muslims to fear Allah and protect their fasting from all misdeeds. They should do their best to do good deeds and compete in giving more alms. Recite the Qur'an as much as possible, pronounce more Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"), Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]"), Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]"), Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), as this is the month of the Qur'an: (The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân)

It is prescribed for believers to do their best in reciting the Qur'an throughout the day and night. By articulating every letter of the Qur'an, a good deed is added to one's record and a good deed is multiplied ten times as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated. They should also keep away from doing all misdeeds or sins, advise one another to the right, and enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

This is a great month in which deeds are multiplied and sins are weightier. Hence, believers should do their best to fulfill what Allah has made obligatory,

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keep away from what Allah forbids, and pay more attention in Ramadan. They should also do their best to do good deeds such as giving charity, visiting the sick, attending funerals, strengthening the ties of kinship, reciting the Qur'an as much as possible, reciting more Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"), Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]"), Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]"), Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), supplications, and other good deeds expecting Allah's Reward and fearing His Punishment. May Allah guide Muslims to what pleases Him and make us and all Muslims fast it and offer night prayer believing in Allah and expecting His Reward. May Allah make us and all Muslims comprehend the Din, keep fast to it, and to be away from the causes of His Wrath and Punishment. I also ask Allah (may He be Praised) to guide all Muslim leaders and rulers and improve their status and guide them to judge by the Islamic law in all matters of worship, work and all affairs. May Allah guide them to this, as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, (And so judge (you O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) among them by what Allâh has revealed) Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: (Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allâh for a people who have firm Faith.) Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: (But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.)

Allah also stated, ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾Say: "Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴿ All Muslims, Muslim leaders, scholars and Muslims in general must fear Allah, submit to the Islamic law and judge by it as it is the law that leads to reform, guidance and a good end. It also leads to the pleasure of Allah. It is the way to the truth of what Allah commands and by which one will keep away from injustice.

May Allah guide everyone, grant them success, and improve their intentions! Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions.

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Outset and End of Ramadan

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8 - Explanatory comments on Allah's (Exalted be He) saying: ❴ They ask you (O Muhammad, peace be upon him) about the new moons. Say: "They are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage". ❵

Q: What is the meaning of Allah's (Exalted be He) saying:❴ They ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage.❵ **?**

A: They ask about the wisdom underlying the existence of the new moons, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) informs us that they are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and Hajj by which people count years and the arrival of Hajj. This is the wisdom of their creation; by the appearance of the new moon, people know that it is the first or the last day of the new month and when twelve months elapse, it is one full year. Thus, people know the times of Hajj, fasting, loans, waiting periods of women, and other benefits.

Confirming the start of the month by sighting the crescent or completing the thirty day period

The minimum number of witnesses required and the ruling on accepting women as witnesses

Q : How to be certain of the beginning of Ramadan and how to recognize the moon?

Answer: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. Peace

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and blessings be upon the Prophet, his family, companions, and whoever is guided by his guidance.

The crescent of Ramadan is proven, according to all scholars, by sighting as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, (Begin fasting on seeing the crescent (of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing the crescent (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)) According to another narration: (Begin fasting on seeing it (i.e. the new moon (of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing it but if the sky is overcast

(and you cannot see it), fast thirty days of (Ramadan).) Also, (then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban) [upon seeing the crescent at the start of Ramadan].)

This means that one should begin and end the fast upon sighting the crescent and when it is not possible to sight it, it is a must to complete the term of Sha'ban as thirty days, and it is a must to count Ramadan as thirty days and then break the fast. If there is a sighting, then praise be to Allah.

It is a must to begin fasting upon sighting the crescent of Ramadan on the thirtieth night of Sha'ban, Sha'ban is then not complete i.e. 29 days, and they must fast accordingly. If they see the crescent on the thirty night of Ramadan, they shall breakfast after the twenty ninth;

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and if they do not sight the crescent, they must complete Sha`ban and Ramadan as thirty days according to the Hadiths. (Begin fasting on seeing the crescent (of Ramadan), and conclude fasting on seeing the crescent (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term (thirty days of Sha`ban.)) This Hadith includes Sha'ban and Ramadan and in another narration: (If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Ramadan.)

The crescent is proved by one just witness as held by the Jumhur (majority of scholars) and as proved by Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) who said, (The people looked for the crescent, so I informed the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that I had sighted it. He fasted and commanded the people to fast.) It is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that (A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: I have sighted the crescent. He (peace be upon him) asked: Do you testify that there is no god but Allah? He replied: Yes. He again asked: Do you testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah? He replied: Yes. He then commanded people to start fasting tomorrow.)

So if one just witness sights the crescent in the beginning of the month, people must fast; however, at the end of the month, there must be two just witnesses and also in other months.

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It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: (If two witnesses testify (that they have seen the crescent), you should begin or end your fasting.) It is authentically reported from Al-Harith ibn Hatib (may Allah be pleased with them) who said (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took our pledge that we would commence with our rites upon the sighting (of the new moon). And if we could not, then upon the word of two reliable persons bearing witness to the sighting, we would observe the rites.)

This means that the testimony of two just witnesses [to the sighting of the crescent] upon the end of the month is a must in all months except for the beginning of Ramadan wherein it is enough to have only one just witness as indicated by the two previous Hadiths.

Scholars differed whether women's testimony regarding the beginning of the month is equal to that of men or not? There are two opinions:

Some accepted it as they accepted the women's narration of the noble Hadiths when the woman is trustworthy. Some others did not accept it. The most preponderant opinion is to accept only men's testimony in this regard as they are more adept in these matters.

Q: How to identify the beginning and end of Ramadan and what is the ruling if one person views the crescent at the beginning or the end of the month?

A: The beginning and the end of a month is to be established by the witness of two or trustworthy persons testifying that they observed the crescent and it can be established by the witness of one person. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾If two witnesses testify (that they have seen the new crescent), you should begin or break your fast.﴿ Moreover, it is authentically related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave orders to people to fast according to the testimony of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) and the testimony of a Bedouin and did not seek another witness.

Allah knows best that the wisdom behind is more precautionary for religion with regard to the beginning and end of a month as stated by scholars. If a person observes the crescent alone in the beginning or end of Ramadan and his witness was disregarded, he should start or break his fast along with people and abandon what he viewed. This coincides with the most authentic of the opinion of scholars for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting. the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and `Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ May Allah grant us success.

Q: How many witnesses are required for establishing the sight of the crescent of [the month of] Shawwal? What is the ruling if one just person sights it and keeps it to himself, should he fast or not? May Allah reward you the best!

A: It is necessary to establish the beginning of every lunar month that there must be two trustworthy persons testifying that they observed the crescent, except the month of Ramadan in which case one person can be accepted according to the most authentic of the two opinion of scholars. It is authentically reported on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that he said, (The people looked for the new moon, so I informed the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that I had sighted it. He fasted and commanded people to fast.) There is another similar Hadith ranked as Hasan (a Hadith whose chain of narration contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish) and narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them).

However, if a person sights the crescent but his witness is not accepted, it is not permissible for him to start or break the fast alone, according to the more authentic of the two views of scholars. Therefore, he should fast and break it along with the people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is on the day when you offer a sacrificial animal.) May Allah grant us success!

Legal Courts

in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Considers the Sighting

General Mufty `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz May Allah preserve him.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

This writing is by Dr. Ahmad Muhammad Al-Muqry, the Director of the Islamic Jurisprudence Complex in which he stresses that the Um Al-Qurra calendar calculations are made in advance on the basis of the solar and lunar conjunction. On the basis of these calculations, the new moon cannot be seen before this conjunction while most of the Saudi Arabian legal court announcements are based on this calendar in Ramadan and in `Eid (festival). How then have you given the Fatwa for twenty years claiming that the

announcement of the courts is correct and in accord with Islamic law? Why have you always supported this incorrect announcement?

Your Fatwa has spread to Britain, America, and in the most countries of Europe. People respect your piety and accept your Fatwa as correct and follow it. They fast Ramadan and offer Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer)

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according to the announcement of the Saudi government that is made one or two days in advance. Others fast according to the actual sighting that is made one or two days after. Thus, the `Eid in one country or even in one family may differ by one or two days. People dispute as a result of your Fatwa.

I have written to you many times to verify whether the announcement of the Saudi Arabian government is based on an actual sighting or on the Um Al-Qurra calendar calculated on the solar and lunar conjunction or based on false testimony? Till now you have not replied or issued your Fatwa, while maintaining that the announcement of the government is correct.

Please, Sheikh, read the letter of Ahmad Muhammad Al-Muqry and do not affirm that the announcement of the government of Saudi Arabia is accurate and rescind your previous Fatwa so that you will be rewarded. Peace be upon you.

Wa-`alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!)

Establish the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhul-Hijjah depends on moon sightings and not on calculations, for the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, (Begin fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and conclude up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)) It is not permissible to depend on calculation as this is

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contrary to the Sunnah established by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in the two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and others. The legal courts in Saudi Arabia depend on sightings and judge accordingly. We support it in this regard obeying Allah (may He be Praised) and His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and well known scholars also follow this. We advise you to fear Allah and do as He (may He be Praised) commanded (And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).) Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states (He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad صلى ا لله عليه وسلم), has indeed obeyed Allâh) and (Say: "Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, he (Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) is only responsible for the duty placed on him (i.e. to convey Allâh's Message) and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on the right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to convey (the message) in a clear way (i.e. to preach in a plain way).") Peace and blessings be upon Muhammad, his family, companions, followers in fairness. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

11- Ruling on using modern equipment such as telescopes to observe the crescent

This letter is from `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother R. A., may Allah guide him to goodness!

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your letter dated 11/1/1390 A.H., may Allah guide you, in which you ask **about the permissibility of following astronomical calculations to confirm the new moon and using modern devices, or is it a must to sight it with the naked-eye? Do they in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia sight the crescent using astronomical calculations and modern equipments or with the naked-eye?**

A: It is not permissible to use astronomical calculations or any other means in sighting the crescent of Ramadan, according to the Ijma` (consensus of scholars). Sheikh Al-Islam Abu Al-`Abbas Ahmad Ibn `Abdul-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) narrated that there was scholarly consensus on this point. It is authentically reported

that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Fast upon sighting it (the new moon) and break your fast upon sighting it. If it is cloudy (and the moon is not visible), complete thirty days of Sha'ban.") Apparently, the legal indications do not oblige people with observing the crescent using modern equipment. It is enough to see the crescent with the naked-eye. However, if a Muslim of upright character uses any of these modern devices in sighting the crescent after sunset, this is unobjectionable because this modern equipment depends on the eye and not on astronomical calculations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia observes sighting the crescent at the beginning and at the end of Ramadan and the days of Hajj by the naked-eye. May Allah make us understand Islam and remain steadfast on it, for He is the Most Beneficent and the Most Generous! As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

President of the Islamic University, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

Q: Is it permissible to sight the crescent from observatories, Your Eminence?

A: Yes, if the person sights the crescent from an observatory, from the top of a mountain, a lighthouse, or through any other means, it is permissible to act upon it. However, a trustworthy witness must testify that he sighted it with his own eyes.

Q: Your Eminence, is it permissible to use telescopes in observing the crescent?

A: There is no harm in using telescopes to observe the crescent. The principle is that one must sight the crescent with one's own eye.

Muslims must cooperate in sighting

the new moon and informing the concerned bodies accordingly

Q: Brother N.S.G. from Tamir says in his question: what is the ruling on a man who sights the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah and does not inform the authorities? Would the ruling differ if it is the new moon of Ramadan?

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Answer: It is the duty of a person who sights the new moon of Ramadan on the 30th of Sha`ban and on the thirtieth night of Ramadan, of Shawwal, or of Dhul-Qa'dah, to inform the court in his country unless they know that others have sighted the new moon as Allah (may He be Praised) states, ﴾Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety)﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey﴿ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ﴾It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen and obey (the appointed authority).﴿ Also,

the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾I enjoin you to fear Allah, and to hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian bondsman...﴿ It is known that those in charge urge Muslims who sight the new moon through the Higher Justice Council to inform the courts. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ﴾Fast when you see it (the new moon)

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and break it on sighting it (the new moon), but if the sky is cloudy for you, then complete the term (thirty).﴿ Applying this Hadiths may not be properly put into practice except by the Guidance of Allah and cooperation between Muslims to sight the new moon and inform the concerned bodies accordingly, so as to abide by legal commands and cooperate to do the good and to be pious. May Allah guide us all!

Q: Is it a must for one who sights the new moon to inform the official bodies?

Answer: Yes, it is a must for anyone who sights the new moon at the beginning and at the end of the month to inform the official bodies accordingly.

Should a person whose testimony of sighting the crescent is rejected fast or break the fast? What is the ruling if

a person cannot inform others of it?

Q. If a person sights the new moon and is not able to inform the authorities, or has his testimony rejected, is it permissible for him to fast alone and on `Eid should he break fast alone?

Answer: Some scholars hold that he must fast alone; however,

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the correct opinion is that it is not permissible for him to fast or break the fast alone. Rather, he must fast and break fast with the people. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you offer your sacrifice.) But if he is in the desert alone, he should fast and break fast according to his sighting.

Q: If I saw the new moon of Ramadan and I went to tell the authority about it and no one believed me, should I fast thirty days even if people fast twenty-nine days only?

A: If one goes to the judge or to the person in charge and testifies that he saw the new moon of Ramadan and no one accepts his testimony and does not act according to it, then it is a controversial issue among Muslim scholars. The majority of them said that he should fast because the beginning of the month has been established for him, and thus, he should fast one day before the people and should break his fast with them when they break their fast. On the other hand, another group of scholars said that he should not fast if people do not follow his sighting of the new moon, because of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ Since people did not fast on that day, then he should not fast it. This is the opinion of Shaykh Al-

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Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah be merciful with him) and a group of Muslim scholars. It is stronger with regard to the evidence deduced from the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting.﴿ Since Muslims did not fast on that day, then his testimony does not apply to him or to others, and thus, he should not fast. This is the preponderant opinion. May Allah grant us success!

14- The legal requirement of Muslims beginning and ending Sawm together and the way to achieve it

Q: At the beginning of Ramadan, the Imam of Al-Azhar talked about the importance of unifying the sighting of the new moon in all Muslim countries and called for Muslim scholars to convene to decide this. What is the opinion of Your Eminence regarding this and the possibility of achieving it?

A: There is no doubt that it is good and desired that Muslims should begin and end the Sawm (Fast) of Ramadan together. Shari`ah (Islamic law) calls for this whenever possible; however, this can only be accomplished through two ways.

The first: All Muslim scholars should stop to depend on calculation, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not depend on this, nor did the Salaf (righteous predecessors).

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And to rely on the sighting of the new moon or completing the thirty days, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained in the Sahih (authentic) Hadiths. Shaykh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah, mentioned in Al-Fatawa, vol. 25, pp. 132-133, that scholars agreed that it is not permissible to rely on calculations to verify Sawm or the ending of Sawm, or other forms of worships. In Al-Fath, vol. 4, p. 127, Al-Hafiz reported from Al-Baji that the Salaf all agreed that it is not permissible to depend on calculation, and their Ijma` (consensus) is a refuting evidence for those who come after them.

The second: To abide by the sighting of the new moon in any Muslim country that applies Shari`ah and carries out its verdicts. Once this country sees the new moon and the sighting is established by Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence, either for starting or ending Sawm, it should be followed, acting upon the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Start observing Sawm on seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan), and stop Sawm on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal); and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term (thirty days of Sha`ban).﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾We are an unlettered nation, we do not write or calculate. The month is such-and-such or such-and-such - (meaning sometimes it is twenty-nine and sometimes it is thirty).﴿ So the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant that a month is either twenty-nine days or thirty days.

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There are many Hadiths in this regard such as the Hadith of Ibn `Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Huzaifa bin Al-Yaman, and others (may Allah be pleased with them). In addition, it is known that any words addressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only includes the people of Al-Madinah, but it addresses the entire Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed), in all times and places, until the Day of Resurrection. So when these two ways are achieved, all Islamic countries will then start Sawm and end it together. May Allah help them realize this and assist them to apply Shari`ah and reject whatever contradicts it, for there is no doubt that this matter is obligatory on them. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O

Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.﴿ There are other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) conveying the same meaning. It is for certain that if they apply Shari`ah in all their matters, their conditions will improve, they be will saved, united, granted victory over their enemies and will attain happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. May Allah open their hearts to do this and assist them. Indeed, He is All-Hearing, Ever Near.

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15- There is no doubt that sighting the crescent differs from one country to another. However, this has no affect on the ruling

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to our dear brother M.M.H., may Allah grant you success in all that is good and benefit Muslims through him, amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your noble letter dated 13/12/1383 A.H. May Allah guide you. The questions it includes are known to us and following is our reply:

1- If sighting the crescent of Ramadan is verified in Hijaz,

are other countries obliged to fast based on this sighting? If there are considerable differences in these regions regarding sighting the crescent, then can this be more than one day? If it is correct that there are differences regarding the beginning of the month of Ramadan, is it applied to `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice), for example? If it is stated that standing at `Arafah is on Tuesday and that `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is on Wednesday as is the case this year, is it permissible for us to postpone

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Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer) to Thursday because we here in Sudan sighted the crescent only on Tuesday night for some reason? Is it permissible to measure the lunar stations based on the crescent size and its position in the sky? What is the meaning of his statement (peace be upon him): ("If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate the month to be thirty days"?) **Is it permissible to rely on the witness delivered by the official judge in Sudan, though it may be that the witness does not observe neither Sawm (fasting) nor Salah (prayer) and most of them call upon persons believing that they can bring benefit or remove harm?**

A: I can say after seeking Allah's help, all praise is due to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his Companions, and those who follow his guidance.

There is no doubt that the Messenger (peace be upon him) ordered his Ummah to rely on sighting the crescent to verify the beginning and the end of their fast. This was conveyed through the Sahih (authentic) detailed Hadith reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It was also reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you offer your sacrifice.) Accordingly, if sighting the crescent is legally verified in a country, other countries should follow it because when the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (Begin Sawm (fasting) upon seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan),

and conclude Sawm upon seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal),) He did not only mean the people of Madinah; rather he meant all Muslims in general. Accordingly, if sighting the crescent is verified in the Hijaz, all those aware of this news in all other countries should follow it because it is a Muslim country judging by Shari`ah. Thus, its verification should be relied on according to the general and unrestricted meaning of the Hadiths. This applies to other countries judging by Shari`ah. However, it is well known that the condition of countries nowadays is that they do not rule by Shari`ah except those whom Allah wills. We supplicate Allah to guide them to abide and judge by His Shari`ah. As for each country sighting the crescent for itself, there is no doubt that this differs from one country to another. Yet considering such differences in giving a ruling is a point of disagreement among scholars. It seems to me that the differences in moon sightings do not matter and that what must be done is to follow the sighting of the moon with regard to starting and ending the fast and offering the sacrifice when it is proven according to Shari'ah that the moon has been sighted in any land. This is based on the general meaning of the Hadiths as mentioned above. This is the opinion of many scholars.

If we say that differences in sighting the crescent are valid, then it is obvious that such differences cannot be more than one day because Muslims are not permitted to fast less than 29 days because the lunar month, according to the purified Shari`ah cannot be neither less than 29 days, nor more than 30 days. Whether or not we say that differences in sighting are valid, it seems that the ruling is the same for both Ramadan and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) and there is no difference between them according to what I know of Shari'ah. But there is an significant issue that in reality occurs if the crescent is verified in

the Hijaz on Sunday night while it was verified in Sudan only on Monday night; and that the government of Sudan does not abide by what was verified in the Hijaz; then what should Muslims in Sudan do? Should they follow their government or depend on what was verified in the Hijaz? This is an important issue about which I have received questions from neighboring countries. I have discussed it with some scholars, yet till now my heart is not settled enough to issue a judgment regarding it. I ask Allah to grant us and you success to know and follow the truth, particularly in issues of disagreement and ambiguity. There is no harm to consult us again regarding this issue at another time.

As for the size of crescents and their height or lowness, there is no consideration for that in issuing a ruling because the purified Shari`ah do not consider this as far as we know.

As for his statement (peace be upon him): ("If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate the month to be thirty days",) according to the soundest of the two opinions of scholars, it means to calculate the month to be thirty days. This is mentioned clearly in the narration related in Sahih Muslim which reads: (calculate the month to be thirty days.) The wording of Sahih Al-Bukhari states: (then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban).) Hadiths explain one another. There is another narration in Sahih Al-Buhkari on the authority of

Abu Hurayrah that reads: (then complete the thirty days of Sha'ban.)

Regarding the opinion of those who held, (calculate the month) to mean calculate it to be 29 days, this is incorrect and the Sahih (authentic) Hadiths prove that it is incorrect. And Allah knows best.

As for depending on the witness delivered by the official judge in Sudan, and that it may be that the witness is disobedient or a Kafir (unbeliever) due to abandoning Salah (prayer), supplicating or seeking the help of the deceased, etc., it is a condition for acceptance of testimony that the witness be a just Muslim. If the judge is a believer who follows the Sunnah of the Prophet and cares only for accepting fair witnesses, then what he states should be adopted. Yet, if he is not so, then his verification should not be adopted, rather in such case one should depend on the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ Another narration reads: ﴾The end of Ramadan is on the day when people begin fasting and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when people sacrifice.﴿ These Hadiths are Sahih (authentic). Thus, if Muslims around you fast, then you should fast

with them and when they break the fast, you should do so as well. Praise be to Allah for facilitating this matter. The secret behind this, Allah knows best, is that the Shari`ah is against disagreement and that it encourages agreement and harmony. May Allah make me and you of those applying, adhering to, ruling by, and arbitrating by it! He is All-Hearer, Ever Near.

Vice President of the Islamic University

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Q: How should people fast when there are differences in sighting the new moon? Should those in far away countries such as America and Australia begin their fast based on the Saudi sighting of the new moon because they are not accustomed to sighting the crescent?

A: The correct position is to ascertain the new crescent depending on sighting without considering the difference of moon sightings in this regard, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded us to rely on our sighting the crescent without giving details. This is based on what was authentically reported from him (peace be upon him): ﴾Begin fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) He (may peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾Do not fast till you see the new moon and do not break fast till you see it; but if the weather is cloudy, calculate the month to be thirty days.﴿ There are many Hadiths in this regard.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not refer to the differences in sighting though this was known to him. A group of scholars have held the view that every country has its own sighting building on what was authentically proven from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he did not act upon the sighting of the people of Al-Sham (the Levant), where he was living in

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Madinah (may Allah be pleased with him). The people of Al-Sham (the Levant) saw the crescent on the night of Friday (i.e. Thursday night, as in the Hijri calendar the night precedes the day) and thus they began their fast accordingly. This happened during the rule of Mu`awiyah (may Allah be pleased with him). As for the people of Madinah, they saw it on the night before Saturday and when Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) was informed by Kurayb about the sighting of the people of Al-Sham (the Levant) and that they began to fast, he said: ﴾"We have seen it on the night before Saturday and we will continue to fast until we see it or complete thirty days."﴿

Another proof is the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Begin fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal)...﴿ This view is strong and was adopted by the members of the Council of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to reconcile between the evidences. May Allah grant us success!

16- Discussion on the confusion occurring due to the disagreement among Muslim countries regarding the beginning of the month of Ramadan

Q: Every year people differ on the beginning and the end of the blessed month of Ramadan with some Muslim countries starting before others. So, what is the way out of this problem?

A: Praise is due to Allah, there is flexibility in this regard. Every country can depend on its own sighting of the moon

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as stated by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) when Kurayb came to him from Al-Sham (The Levant) while Ibn `Abbas was in Madinah. Ibn `Abbas asked him, "When did Mu`awiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) and the people of Al-Sham begin fasting? Kurayb said, "People saw it (the moon) on Friday and therefore Mu`awiyah and people started fasting upon that." Ibn `Abbas said, "We saw observed it on Saturday and we will continue fasting till we complete the duration of the month i.e. 30 days, or sight it." Ibn `Abbas considered that Al-Sham is far from Madinah and that the people of Madinah were not bound by the sighting of the people of Al-Sham. Some scholars are held this view and believed that every country is to depend on their sighting of the moon. Accordingly, if people sight the moon in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the people of Al-Sham and Egypt and other countries begin fasting with them, it is good for the general Hadiths in this regard. However, if they rely on their own sighting, there is no harm in this. The Council of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued a decision to this effect stating that every country may rely on its own sighting of the crescent according to the referred to Hadith of Ibn `Abbas and other Hadiths of the same meaning.

Addressing the entire Muslim community, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴿Begin fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal).﴾

Q : Who is the addressee in saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): ﴿Begin fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan) and conclude fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal).﴾

A: In this statement, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) addresses the entire Muslim community.

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18- Depending on radio broadcasting for the verification of the the new moon birth is more apt to be relied upon than the telegram

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to whoever receive it of Muslims**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Many people ask about the ruling on hearing the news of the birth of the new moon at the beginning and at the end of Ramadan through the Saudi Arabia radio in the villages that have no telegraphic services, is it permissible for them to rely on that news?

Answer: There is no doubt that Allah (may He be Praised) made it obligatory on Muslims to fast Ramadan when they see the new moon or when Sha`ban's term is completed to be thirty days and to break their fast when seeing the new moon or when Ramadan's term is completed to be thirty days as in the authentic Hadith: ﴾Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan) and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term (thirty days of Sha`ban.)﴿ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi with a good chain of narration.

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Al-Tirmidhi reported a Hadith narrated by `Aishah with a good chain of narration that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ﴾The end of Ramadan is on the day when people begin fasting and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is on the day when people sacrifice.﴿

There are many legal indications in this regard and there is no doubt that if the government becomes assured of the beginning and the end of the month through the legal court, it will inform the people through the radio and they will fast or break their fast in terms of this news and also everyone who hears this news through the government bodies has to do that in Saudi Arabia and to rely on the news of the radio if it is heard by one or more than one trustworthy person in the occasion of the beginning of the month and by two or more trustworthy people on the occasion of its ending. Thus, Muslims have to fast and break their fast following the Imam and Muslims. Relying on the radio news is more apt than relying on a telegram, if the people rely on the news of a telegram as it really happens there will be no blame and it will be more apt to fast and break their fast relying on the news of the Saudi Arabian radio known through trustworthy people. May Allah guide us all. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, his family, and companions.

Vice Present of the Islamic University

in Madinah

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Q: What do you think of depending on the Radio in fasting and breaking the fast? What is your opinion on this. If you confirm that, should we know the channel broadcasting this news and hear it from a trustworthy announcer or is it enough to issue this news by the government?

A: All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet. It is permissible to rely on the news broadcasted by the radio to witness the beginning of Ramadan, Dhul-Hijjah and Shawwal if the person who hears the news is one or more than one trustworthy person on the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan, two or more trustworthy people on the occasion of the beginning of Shawwal, Dhul-Hijjah and other months. This is based on the fact that judging the hearing of the news broadcast as seeing the new moon. The authentic Hadiths indicated the obligation of depending on one or more upright people in seeing the new moon of Ramadan and on two or more regarding other months. There is no doubt that relying on the news of the Radio is more apt than relying on the news of a telegram as the person who announces it on the Radio is well understood whereas a telegram that might not be understood except by particular people who are acquainted with its letters. If it is permissible to depend on a telegram, it would be more apt to rely on the news of the radio.

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But the announcer must be an upright person that can be relied on for the broadcasting of this news by the Muslim government if the radio is known to be trustworthy and free from telling lies. It is known that the government will rely on what it broadcasts to the people and send it in telegrams to judges and princes in all of the Kingdom and will fast and break their fast accordingly. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾The end of Ramadan is on the day when people stop fasting and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is on the day when people sacrifice.﴿ Reported by Al-Tirmidhy from `Aishah with a good chain of narration. Al-Tirmidhi also reported, with a good chain of narration, from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it, and 'Eid Al-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ So if it is permissible for the people in a country to rely on the sound of cannons for fasting and breaking their fast, as it was made a sign indicating the beginning and the ending of the new month, it would be more apt to rely on the news of the radio and telegrams issued from a legal source known for being trustworthy and more apt to be relied on than canons. And Allah is the All-Knower.

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All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, and upon his family and whoever follows his guidance.

I was asked by many brothers about the ruling on depending on the radio to start and break their fast and if this matches the authentic Hadith stating: ﴾Start fasting on seeing it

(the new moon of Ramadan) and give up fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal)...》 **If it is proven that the new moon has been observed by a just witness in a Muslim country, should the neighboring countries follow this country? If the answer is yes, is there any evidence? Should we consider the different places of these countries?**

Answer: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), through many chains of narration, said: 《Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan) and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal). And if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate thirty (days of Sha`ban).》 According to another narration: 《..then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban).》 According to another narration: 《then complete the thirty days of Sha'ban.》

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 《Do not fast until

you see the new moon or complete the term (thirty days), then fast until you see the new moon or complete the term (thirty days).》 There are many Hadiths in this regard that indicate that only sighting the crescent or completing (thirty days) is considered but calculations of astronomy are not considered. This is what is right and the unanimous opinion of considered scholars. The Hadiths do not indicate that all the people should sight the new moon but the meaning is to verify that by the just and fair evidence. Abu Dawud reported, with a good chain of narration, from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), that he said: 《The people looked for the new moon, so I informed the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that I had sighted it. He fasted and commanded the people to fast.》 Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) reported the following Hadith, which Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Hibban judged it as authentic, from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): 《That a Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him) and said, I have sighted the new moon. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him: "Do you witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?" The Bedouin said: Yes I do. The Prophet said: O Bilal, tell the people to fast tomorrow.) It is also narrated by

`Abdul-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Al-Khattab: that he delivered a speech on the day of doubt and said: (I used to sit with the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). I asked them and they told me that he (peace be upon him) said: Observe fast on sighting it (the new moon) and break (fast) on sighting it (the new moon), but if the sky is cloudy for you, then complete the number of thirty days. If two Muslim witnesses that they have seen the new moon, then you should begin (i.e. fasting at the outset of Ramadan) or break your fasting (at the end of Ramadan).) Related by Ahmad. Al-Nisa'y also narrated it but his narration does not specify the witnesses to be: "two Muslim".

Likewise, the emir of Makkah Al-Harith ibn Hatib said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took our pledge that we should embark on the rituals upon the sighting (of the new moon). If we cannot sight it but two reliable people bear witness to the sighting, we should observe the rituals on the basis of their witness.) Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Darqutny. Al-Darqutny said, this is a connected successive authentic chain of narration. These Hadiths indicate that it is enough to sight the new moon of Ramadan by one just witness but there must be two just witnesses to sight the new moon at the end of Ramadan and other months as understood by the mentioned Hadiths. Most scholars maintained this view and it is the right view that has clear evidence in its support.

Thus, it is evident that the sight intended is the verification of the new crescent through the legal evidence and it does not mean that every person should sight the new moon. If a Muslim country that applies the Islamic law such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia broadcasts that it verified the sighting of Ramadan, Shawwal, or Dhul-Hijjah's new moon,

all its subjects have to follow it.

Other countries also have to follow it as thought by most of scholars as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: (The month (may be) 29 nights (i.e. days), and do not fast until you see the moon, and if the sky is overcast, then complete Sha'ban as thirty days.) Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). It is also reported by Muslim in the following narration: (Start fasting upon seeing the new moon (of Ramadan) and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal). If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate thirty (days of Sha`ban.)) Al-Bukhari reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: (Start fasting upon seeing the new moon (of Ramadan) and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal). And if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha`ban.) Muslim reported the Hadith in this narration but said: (If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), count the month as thirty days.) Therefore, it is apparent that these Hadiths and others to the same effect are equally applied to all Muslims.

In his commentary on Al-Muhadhab [a book in the Islamic law according to the Shafi`i school of law], Al-Nawawy (may Allah be merciful with him) related that Imam ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah be merciful with him) said: This is the saying of Al-Layth ibn Sa`d, Imam

Al-Shafi'y and Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful with them all). He i.e. Ibn Al-Mundhir, said: I know also that it is the saying of Al-Madany i.e. Malik, and Al-Kufi i.e. Abu Hanifah (may Allah be merciful with them). A group of scholars said the ruling of sight would be general if the moon sighting locations give the same outcome but if they differ, each group of people may have their own sighting.

Imam Al-Tirmidhy (may Allah be merciful with him) attributed that to the people of knowledge who raised evidence supporting that through the Hadith reported by Muslim in his Sahih collection of Hadith (from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that Kurayb came to him in Al-Madinah from the Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) at the end of Ramadan and told him he sighted the new moon in the Levant on Friday night and that Mu`awiyah and the people fasted accordingly. Ibn `Abbas said: But we saw it on Saturday night and so we still fast until we sight the new moon or complete the term thirty days. Kurayb said: Do you not consider the sighting and fasting of Mu`awiyah as enough? Ibn `Abbas said, "No as this is what the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to do".) They argue that this indicates that Ibn `Abbas is of the opinion that the sighting is not general and that every country has its own sighting if the sighting locations are different and they said that the sighting locations in the Madinah area are not united with the sight locations in the Levant. Others said that Ibn Abbas did not consider

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the sighting of the people of Al-Sham (the Levant) as only Kurayb gave witness to that while the witness of only one witness is not considered for sighting the new moon to end the month and is only considered for sighting the new moon at the beginning of the month.

This issue was submitted to the Council of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the second tournament held in Sha'ban in the year 1392 A.H. and they agreed that the preponderant opinion in this regard is that the matter is flexible and it is permissible to follow any one of the two opinions as thought by the Kingdom's scholars.

I said, this saying reconcile all evidences and sayings of scholars. If this is known, scholars in every country should pay attention to this issue at the beginning and the end of the month and should agree on what is closer to the right Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings). They should then work accordingly and inform people and those in charge about that and the Muslim public should follow them in this regard. They should not differ in that as it might cause to divide the people and spread many gossips if the country was non-Muslim.

The Muslim countries should depend on what the scholars say and oblige people to fast or break their fast according to the mentioned Hadiths and in conformity with the binding obligations to prevent the subjects from doing what Allah forbids.

It is known that Allah may guide the ruler to prevent evils that may not be prevented by the Qur'an i.e. mere admonition.

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I ask Allah to guide us and all Muslims to comprehend the religion, hold fast to it, and judge by it and beware of what contradicts it. Allah is the Most Bountiful, the Most Generous. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions.

The President of the Islamic University in Al-Madinah

The state officials should adopt the news delivered by the Muslim state that depends on seeing the crescent. As for the individuals, they should follow their leaders

Q: Is fasting based on the radio news valid?

A: The officials are responsible for the affairs of Muslims in your country as well as other countries can depend on the news delivered by radio if it is issued by a Muslim country that depends on seeing the crescent, not on astronomical calculation. As for the Muslim subjects, they should fast and break their fast according to their leaders because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The beginning of Ramadan is the day on which you start fasting, while the end of it is the day on which you finish fasting, and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is the day on which you sacrifice.) Narrated by Abu Dawud on the authority of Abu Hurayrah with a Hasan Isnad (a Hadith whose Isnad contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish). It is substantiated by proofs cited in the Hadith of `Aishah and other Hadiths. May Allah grant us success!

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Sawm and Iftar with one's place of residence

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to our honorable questioner, may Allah guide you to all good, Amen!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your respectful letter dated 2/9/1390 A.H., may Allah guide you, and I read its contents including your congratulations for the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan. May Allah guide you to everything that is good! May Allah accept from all of us and make us and all Muslims enjoy this month for years to come in good conditions and on the right path, for Allah is the All-Bountiful, All-Generous.

You mentioned in your letter that some employees in the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Pakistan observed Sawm (Fast) with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others with Pakistan three days after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced the beginning of Ramadan. You asked about the ruling on this case.

Answer: According to the apparent meaning of evidence from Shari`ah (Islamic law), anyone

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who resides in a country has to fast with its people. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting; the end of Ramadan (i.e. `Eid-ul-Fitr) is on the day when you end fasting; and `Eid-ul-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.﴿ Since Shari`ah urges Muslims to unite and warns against separation and since the locations of sighting new moons differ as agreed upon by the people of knowledge and as said by Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), therefore those employees in Pakistan who observed Sawm with the people of Pakistan are closer to hit the truth than those who observed Sawm with Saudi Arabia. This is because the two countries are far away from each other and both of them have different locations of sighting the new moon. Undoubtedly, the opinion that all Muslims should observe Sawm when sighting the new moon or completing the term of thirty days in any Muslim country conforms with the apparent meaning of evidence from Shari`ah. Yet if that is not possible, then what we mentioned is closer to the right thing. May Allah grant us success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

President of the Islamic University in Madinah

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Q: I am an Egyptian man, who works in Iraq. I broke my Sawm (Fasting) on the last day of Ramadan in Iraq, following the confirmation of the sighting of the crescent moon on the radio from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and other countries. I, therefore, broke my Sawm according to this,

knowing that the people in the country I was staying in were still fasting. What is the ruling on this? What is the reason behind the differences between people in (determining the beginning and the end of) Ramadan?

A: You should follow the people of the country where you are staying; when they observe Sawm, you should do the same, and when they end their Sawm, you should do so too. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("The Sawm (beginning of Ramadan) is the day when you observe Sawm; the Iftar (ending of Ramadan) is the day when you end Sawm, and 'Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is the day when you sacrifice (animals).") Because disagreement is evil, it is obligatory on you to follow the people of the country you are living in. When the Muslims in your country break Sawm, break Sawm with them, and when they observe Sawm, observe Sawm with them.

As for the reason behind this discrepancy, it is because some people see the new moon and others do not. Those who have seen the new moon may be trusted by others and have their confidence, and so they follow their sighting, and others may not trust them and so they do not follow their sighting; this is why the discrepancy occurs. One country may see the new moon and act accordingly,

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and start or end their Sawm on that basis, but another country may not be convinced by this sighting and not trust the first country, due to many reasons, political or otherwise.

It is obligatory on Muslims to observe the Sawm together when they see the new moon and break their Sawm when they see it, according to the general meaning of the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("When you see the new moon (of Ramadan), observe Sawm; and when you see the new moon (of Shawwal), break your Sawm. If the sky is covered from you (overcast), complete a total of thirty days.") If everybody is sure that the new moon has actually been sighted and that it is a true confirmed sighting, it is obligatory to start and end Sawm according to it. But if people disagree as to what has taken place and they do not trust one another, you should observe Sawm and break Sawm with the Muslims in your country, acting upon the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("The Sawm (beginning of Ramadan) is the day when you observe Sawm; the Iftar (ending of Ramadan) is the day when you end your Sawm, and 'Eid-ul-Adha is the day when you sacrifice (animals).") It was authentically reported from Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that Kurayb told him that the people of the Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) had started observing Sawm on Friday, Ibn 'Abbas said, "We saw it on Saturday, so we will continue our Sawm until we see the new moon or complete thirty days." He did not follow the sighting of the people of the Levant, because the Levant is far from Madinah and there may be differences in the appearance of the crescent moon between the two. He (Ibn 'Abbas, Allah be pleased with him) thought that this was a matter subject to Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal

rulings). You, therefore, have a good example to follow in

Ibn 'Abbas and the scholars who followed his opinion and said that you should start the Sawm and end the Sawm with the people of your country of residence.

Q: What is the ruling if the start of Ramadan has been confirmed and announced in one Muslim country, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, though the month has not started in our country? Do we have to observe Sawm (Fast) with Saudi Arabia or we are to follow our country regarding the start and end of Ramadan? Likewise, what is the ruling if the two countries differ with regard to the start of Shawwal i.e., `Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast)? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: A Muslim has to start and end observing Sawm of Ramadan according to the sighting of the moon of the country where they live. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting; the end of Ramadan (i.e. `Eid-ul-Fitr) is on the day when you end fasting; and `Eid-ul-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.) May Allah grant us success!

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to our honorable questioner, may Allah guide you and provide you with more knowledge, Amen.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your respectful letter dated 2/12/1973, may Allah grant you His Guidance, including the two questions and I was pleased that you care about benefiting yourself and your desire to have more knowledge. There is no doubt that this promises good and brings more knowledge. It was authentically reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: (If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes them comprehend the religion.)

May Allah help me and all our brothers to comprehend His Religion, hold fast to it, and be safe from misleading trials, for Allah is the Only One sought for help. Following is the text of the two questions along with their answers:

Q: Muslims in Pakistan usually sight the crescent of Ramadan and Shawwal two days after it is sighted in Saudi Arabia. Do they have to observe Sawm (Fast) according to the sighting of Saudi Arabia or Pakistan?

A: The proper ruling of our Purified Shar` (Islamic law) regarding this is that it is Wajib (obligatory) for people of every country to start observing Sawm according to the sighting of the crescent of their own country. This is ascertained for two reasons:

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First: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end fasting, and `Eid-ul-Adha is on the day when you sacrifice.) (Related by Abu Dawud and others with a good Sanad (chain of narrators)) Accordingly, as long as the questioner is in Pakistan, they have to start Sawm with its people and end it with them as they are meant by the Hadith mentioned above and they have to act upon it. It may be worth mentioning that a group of scholars including Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) are of the view that people of each country have their own independent sighting of the crescent.

Second: Starting and ending Sawm on different days (in one country) causes confusion, raises condemnation, and arouses disputes and quarrels. Conversely, our perfect Shari`ah (Islamic law) calls for integrity, harmony, cooperation in righteousness and piety, and the abandonment of conflicts and clashes. This is understood from Allah's Saying: (And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur'ân), and be not divided among yourselves) In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Mu`adh and Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with them both) when he sent them to Yemen: (Give people good tidings and do not fill them with aversion; love each other, and do not differ.)

21- Timing of starting Sawm for residents in non-Muslim countries

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable sister in Islam, may Allah grant you success. Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your letter dated 6/10/1389 AH and understood what you meant. Many thanks for your congratulations on `Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast). May Allah accept our Sawm (Fast) and many returns for all Muslims hoping them all goodness and integrity. He is the Best One asked for help.

With regards to your question about the permissibility of observing and breaking Sawm in Ramadan according to crescent sighting in Saudi Arabia during your stay in Spain, there is no harm in doing so. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Start fasting on sighting the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on sighting the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)) This

Hadith applies to all Muslims. Saudi Arabia is the most entitled country to be followed as it rules according to Shari`ah (Islamic law). May Allah grant it more success and guidance! There is nothing wrong with your act because Spain does not rule according to Islam and its people do not care about it.

Concerning the issue of combing two Salahs (Prayers), the matter is flexible. The Purified Shar` (Islamic law) allows combining two Salahs at the time of the earlier one or at the time of the later one or in the in-between time. Due to lawful excuses (i.e., sickness and travel), the two combined Salahs can be performed at the same time. It is permissible, when it is necessary, to talk at the interval between the two combined Salahs. Time for Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) starts after offering the `Isha' (Night) Prayer, even if it is combined with the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer at the time of the Maghrib, and continues until the time for Al-Fajr-ul-Sadiq (true dawn) begins. I ask Allah to grant us and you comprehension of religion, let us adhere to it until we meet Him, and cure you and help you return home safely, for He is the Most Generous.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Vice President of the Islamic University

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Your Eminence, Sheikh `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, **May Allah preserve him!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Q: I was sent by my country to America and we fasted a day for Ramadan without sighting the new moon before Sha`ban had ended as the sky was cloudy and we did not fast until we were informed by some Islamic centers there and we did that arguing that Saudi Arabia fasted before Sha`ban had ended knowing that most of the Islamic centers fasted after Sha`ban had ended; according to their calendar. Who is right and who is wrong? What should the people who are wrong do?

Wa`alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!) All praise is due to Allah and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger, his family, companions and those guided by his guidance.

Answer: Anyone who fasts following Saudi Arabia is right as the new moon was proven by the legal evidence on the evening of Monday; the night before Tuesday and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: (Observe fast on sighting it (the new moon) and break (fast)

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on sighting it (the new moon), but if the sky is cloudy for you, then complete the number (of thirty) in Sha`ban.) Reported by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Collection of Hadith. There are many Hadiths in this regard. Anyone who did not fast and began on Wednesday has to fast one day to make up for the Tuesday missed in the calendar of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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The Ruling On Depending on Astronomical Calculations

All Praise be to Allah, Lord of 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn, and all that exists); peace and blessings be upon His Messenger and Servant, Muhammad, his family, Companions and those who follow them in righteousness up to the Day of Resurrection! To proceed:

There is much argument about astronomical calculation to determine the beginning and the end of Ramadan and the two 'Eids (the Festival of Breaking the Fast and the Festival of the Sacrifice). So I want to explain the ruling to the majority of the people in this country and in other countries to become cognizant in their `Ibadah (worship) of their Lord. With the Guidance of Allah, I say:

Allah (Exalted be He) makes many rulings linked with new moons such as Sawm (Fast), Hajj (Pilgrimage), the two 'Eids (the Festival of Breaking the Fast and the Festival of the Sacrifice), `Iddahs (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood), Ila' (husband's oath not to have intercourse with his wife for four months or more) and others. This is based on the fact that one can sight the new moon with their naked eyes and the most correct of all information is acquired by sighting. It is also because the Prophet (peace be upon him) made the ruling on verifying the new moon linked to the sight only as this natural sight can be done by the majority of people and that would not cause no confusion in one's religious matters. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts.

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The month is like this and this, i.e., sometimes of twenty-nine days and sometimes thirty days.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (Do not start the fast or break it until you see the new moon. If the new moon is obscured from you, then complete a full thirty days)

Hence, it becomes clear that the reliable factor in determining the time of Sawm (Fast) and breaking the Fast and the rest of months is the sight of the moon or completing the prescribed period. The mere birth of the new moon is not considered in Shari`ah (Islamic law) to verify the beginning and ending of the lunar month with the Ijma`(consensus of scholars) by trustworthy Muslim scholars, unless it is sighted legally. This ruling is pertinent to the timings of worships. Thus whoever from among the contemporary scholars contradicts this Ijma` (consensus of scholars), then he will have his opinion rejected as the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the unanimous agreement of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) are higher than any other argument. So, the calculations of the sun and moon motions are not considered in this respect as we mentioned before and according to the following evidence:

A- The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the people to begin Sawm (Fast) and break their Fast upon sighting the new moon when he said: (Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal

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) In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) restricted this meaning when he said: (Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break your fast until you see it)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Muslims to complete the term thirty days if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it) and did not ask them to resort to astrologers even if the astrologers' saying is a base only or the base with the sighting to verify the month to show that. Since nothing was reported to verify the opposite, it indicates that there is no legal consideration but for the sighting or completing the term thirty days in verifying the month. This Shar' (Islamic law) shall continue until the Day of Resurrection. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (and your Lord is never forgetful)

The allegation that the the intended meaning of sighting in the Hadith is the knowledge, the general thought of the existence of the new moon or the possibility of sighting the moon, not to worship through sighting, is rejected. This is because the sighting in the Hadith is visual sighting, not through knowledge. It is also because the Prophet's Companions, who are the most cognizant of the Arabic language and the objectives of Shari`ah (Islamic law) understood that the sighting is by the eyes.

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It had been the habit during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and at the time of his Companions to work according to this norm without resorting to astrologers to know timings. It is not correct to allege that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate the month to be thirty days.) The meaning is the he commanded Muslims to calculate the lunar motions to know by this calculation the beginning and ending of the month. This is because this narration is explained by another one in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (calculate the month to be thirty days.) The same can be applied to all the narrations that bear the same effect.

Yet, those who call for uniting the beginning of the months depend on the lunar movements whether the sky is clear or cloudy though the Hadith asked the people to make the calculation only if the sky is cloudy.

B- Linking the verification of the lunar moon to the sight agrees with the tolerant objectives of Shari'ah (Islamic law). This is because the sighting of the moon is a general matter that most of the majority and minority of people can do in deserts and in towns in contrary with the calculation that would be difficult and contradict with the tolerant objectives of Shari'ah (Islamic law) as the majority of the Muslims do not know how to calculate and the allegation that the Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed) now is not illiterate and knows astrology is not considered

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as that would not change the Commands of Allah. Indeed, what Allah commands is general for the whole Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed) for all ages.

C- During the first ages of Islam, scholars have unanimously agreed upon considering the sighting of the moon to verify the lunar months not the calculation. It has never been recognized that any of such scholars used calculation when the sky was cloudy. Yet, when the sky was clear it was more apt not to use it.

D- Depending on the calculation of the time in which the new moon could be seen after the sunset except for considerable matters that might prevent that which the people of calculation may differ in and the calculation for what prevents the sight to determine the timings of worship do not unite Muslims. So, the Shari'ah (Islamic law) considers only the sighting of the moon regardless of the calculation as a kind of mercy on the Muslim Ummah (nation based on one creed), putting an end to controversy and returning them to something all of them know wherever they were.

A person must pay attention to the difference to the new juristic issues which aroused controversy and difference among scholars. Such issues were studied by the Council of Senior Scholars in one of its previous seminars and came to a decision by the majority that the most preponderant opinion is that each country has its own sighting and that they have to resort to their scholars in this regard. This comes in accordance with what Imam Muslim related in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith) through the Hadith of Kurayb narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas. Its text is as follows: It is related on the authority of Kurayb that Um Al-Fadl bint Al-Harith sent him to Mu`awiyah in Al-Sham (the Levant: the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) and that he came to Al-Sham (The Levant) and I carried out her errand. While there, I found that Ramadan has started

I sighted the new moon on Friday night. Then I came to Madinah at the end of the month and I was asked by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas then he mentioned the new moon and said: When did you sight the new moon? I said: "On Friday night. He asked: Did you see it? I said: "Yes and the people sighted it and began their Sawm (Fast) and so did Mu`awiyah. Ibn Abbas said: "But we sighted it on Saturday night and hence we shall carry on our Fast until we complete the term thirty days or sight the moon". I said: "Is not the sight of Mu`awiyah enough? Ibn Abbas said: "No, since this is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded us to do".

Regarding the saying of those who state that one has to consider the sighting of the new moon in Makkah in particular, this has no evidence or base at all. In addition, it also means that Sawm (Fast) would not be obligatory on anyone who sights the new moon in other places unless they sight it only in Makkah.

Finally, I ask Allah to endow Muslims with comprehending His Religion, work according to His Book (Qur'an) and Prophet's Sunnah, protect them from misleading trials and make those who lead them the best ones among them, for Allah is the All-Hearing, the Ever-Near, and may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his Companions!

It is not permissible to depend on calendars to prove the beginning of Ramadan

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother G.A.H, may Allah increase him in knowledge and faith and make him blessed wherever he goes! Amen.

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) To proceed:

I have received your honorable letter dated 2/8/1384 A.H., and I was pleased to know that you are healthy and that you care for knowing about the issues of your religion. All Praise be to Allah for that, and I ask Allah to increase you in knowledge and guidance, make us hold fast to His True Religion by which He sent His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), to provide you with useful knowledge to achieve your hopes, to make you benefit Muslims and protect us and you from misleading trials, for Allah is All-Hearing, the Ever-Near!

O our honorable son! You have a serious position. So I advise you and myself to fear Allah. I always ask Allah to make us hold fast to Truth, protect us from misleading trials,

exert much efforts in studying the Glorious Qur'an as much as we can and the Biography of our honest Prophet (peace be upon him) whenever possible along with calling people to Islam and spreading its great virtues as much as possible. May Allah guide you and make you amongst the guided ones who guide people to the Straight Path. Regarding your question about Sawm (Fast) in Germany, then here is the answer:

It is not permissible at the beginning of the month to depend on calendars and calculation as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal); if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha`ban.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Do not fast till you see the new moon, and do not break fast till you see it; but if the weather is cloudy, calculate the month to be thirty days﴿ If this is known then you must depend on the proven sighting of the moon through the Saudi embassy or other Muslim embassies or by the sighting of Muslims in the nearby countries. The same act is also applied to the end of the month. As for the timing of Sawm (Fast), you have to depend on what is common to you in your country. If it is established among you that the day in Ramadan is nine hours, then fast for nine hours. The same is also true if you fast more or less than this number of hours. Yet, when doubt arises then you can discharge your responsibility by means of increasing your Fast for a half or one hour

to make sure that you have completed your Sawm (Fast). May Allah guide you and make your matters easy for you! You have to remember Allah's (Exalted be He) Saying: ﴿So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴾ as well as the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴿When I command you to do anything, do of it as much as you possibly can.﴾ It is enough in these matters when the dawn or sunset are not clear to act according to what the people think almost correct as well as in according to the evidences which point out this act. All Praise be to Allah (Exalted be He) who says in His Glorious Book: ﴿Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ Was-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!); and peace and blessings be upon His Servant and Messenger, Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Vice President of the Islamic University

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Q: In some Muslim countries people start observing Sawm (Fast) in Ramadan according to the calendar and not according to sighting the new moon. What is the ruling on this act?

A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded Muslims to start observing Sawm (Fast) where he said: (When they see the crescent and stop fasting when they see it; and if the clouds obstruct their sighting of the new moon then they are to complete the month thirty days.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice) and left out one thumb the third time. Another month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice).) He (peace be upon him) meant by this that the month may be twenty-nine or thirty days. Moreover, it is reported in Sahih Al-Bukhari (authentic Book of Hadith) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see the new moon), complete thirty days of Sha`ban.) In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break fast until you see it; but if the weather is cloudy, complete the month to be thirty days.) There are many other Hadiths to the same effect and they all

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signify the obligation of acting upon sighting the new moon or otherwise completing the month to be thirty days. Moreover, all these Hadiths point out the impermissibility of acting upon astronomical calculations in this regard. It is worth mentioning that Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), conveyed the Ijma` (consensus) of Muslim scholars on the impermissibility of depending on astronomical calculations to confirm the appearance of the new moon. This is the truth that can not be doubted. May Allah grant us success!

24- Sahih Hadiths signify the obligation of sighting the new moon or completing the month to be thirty days but not depending on astronomical calculation

Q: Is it permissible to start observing Sawm (Fast) of Ramadan and offer Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer) depending on astronomical calculations of calendars?

A: It is impermissible to depend on calendars, i.e., astronomical calculations with regard to the start and end of Sawm (Fast) for doing so contradicts Sahih (authentic) Hadiths. Rather, this is to be decided through sighting the new moon for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not start the Fast or break it until you see the new moon. If the new moon is obscured from you, then complete a full thirty days.﴿ Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾We are an illiterate nation; we neither write nor know accounts. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice) and left out one thumb

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on the third time. Another month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice).﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) meant by this that the month may be twenty nine days or thirty days. Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), calculate thirty (days of Sha`ban).﴿ All the Hadiths mentioned above are Sahih (authentic). They differ in the wording but are the same in meaning, i.e., the obligation of sighting the new moon or completing the month to be thirty days and the impermissibility of depending on astronomical calculation. This is the view of trustworthy scholars. May Allah grant us success!

25-

Nobody has the right to call for nullifying or rectifying sighting the moon according to the results of observatories

I read the article that has been published by Al-Jazirah newspaper in its issue on Saturday dated 2/12/1400 A. H. The concerned article was entitled: "Last Ramadan was thirty days not twenty nine" and was written by brother Ahmad Al-Mis`ary. The writer supported his view by mentioning that international observatories, including that of the University of Riyadh, affirmed the astronomical calculations of Um Al-Qura to the effect that the last Ramadan was thirty days, not twenty nine days. The writer claimed that the crescent has set all over the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Sunday night corresponding to the twenty ninth of Ramadan before the sun did for a period of no less than ten minutes...etc.

The writer also mentioned that the Istanbul Conference laid down the rules for reasonable sighting to sort out the concerned problem.

Since this matter is very important as it decides the dates of the start and end of Sawm (Fast) and that of Hajj, I think I have to write a brief word on it to clarify the truth and nullify all that contradicts it. To commence, many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths

of the Prophet (peace be upon him) signify the command to depend on sighting the new moon or otherwise completing the month to be thirty days without paying attention to astronomical calculations. All Muslims all over the world have thus to comply with this command and abide by it. On the other hand, it is impermissible to belie trustworthy Muslims who declare that they have seen the new moon on the grounds that such and such observatory claimed so or that the Istanbul Conference worked out so.

It is worth mentioning that our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the best master who did not speak of his own desire but only conveyed the inspiration that was inspired to him, preceded all when he drew up clear principles for Muslims which are known to the learned and the ignorant, the urban and the bedouin, etc. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and when the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban).﴿ According to another narration: ﴾... observe fasting for thirty days.﴿ And in a third narration: ﴾... calculate the month to be thirty days.﴿ In another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾... then complete the thirty days (of Sha`ban).﴿ Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him)

said: ﴾Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break your fast until you see it; but when

the weather is cloudy, calculate the month to be thirty days.)

Besides, it is narrated that `Abdul-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Al-Khattab gave a Khutbah (sermon) on the twenty ninth of Sha`ban and said: "Verily, I sat with the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and asked them about it and they told me that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (Observe fast on sighting it (the new moon) and break (fast) on sighting it (the new moon) and seek nearness to Allah with both of them (fasting and breaking the fast). When the sky is cloudy for you, then complete thirty (days). If two Muslim witnesses testify (that they have seen the new moon), then you have to begin or break your fasting) ". In addition, it is narrated that the commander of Makkah, Al-Harith ibn Hatib, (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took our pledge that we should embark on the rituals upon the sighting (of the new moon). If we cannot sight it but two reliable people bear witness to the sighting, we should observe the rituals on the basis of their witness.) (The two Hadiths mentioned above are Sahih (authentic)

Also, it is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice)

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Another month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice) and left out one thumb on the third time.) The Prophet meant that the month may be thirty or twenty nine days. There are many other Hadiths to the same effect. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not advise his Companions to verify the start or end of months by astronomical calculations. Rather, he (peace be upon him) ordered them to see whether the new moon appears on the sky or not; an easy means that can be practiced by common people. If the new moon is not seen, the month is to be completed thirty days. All righteous predecessors of our Ummah (nation based on one creed) from amongst the Prophet's Companions or those who followed them in righteousness from among the trustworthy knowledgeable people have unanimously agreed upon this act. Hence, no one is allowed to oppose them and nullify the matter of sighting the moon just because of the claim raised by observatories or claiming that sighting the new moon contradicts their own calculations. Similarly, no one is allowed to stipulate the conformity of sighting the moon to the observatories' statements for doing so is tantamount to introducing something in Din (Islam) that Allah does not permit, restricting something that Allah and His Messenger do not restrict, opposing the Prophet (peace be upon him) who did not speak out of his desire, and making things difficult for people by asking them to follow something which is only known to a few of them.

Everybody knows that nothing is better or more perfect than the Ruling of Allah and His Messenger regarding all different matters. Allah (Glorified be He) says: (Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allâh for a people who have firm Faith.) My advice to all Muslims in general, and to astronomical calculators in particulars, is to fear Allah and beware of

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opposing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and legislating for people things that Allah does not permit, for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?) And: (And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah - legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some

Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.﴾ Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴿Say: "Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, he (Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) is only responsible for the duty placed on him (i.e. to convey Allâh's Message) and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on the right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to convey (the message) in a clear way (i.e. to preach in a plain way)."﴾ And: ﴿And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh).﴾ There are many other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) to the same effect.

In addition, it is narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah...﴾ Also, it is narrated in the Sahih Al-Bukhari (authentic Book of Hadith) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿All the people of my Ummah (nation) will enter Jannah (Paradise) except those who refuse. It was said: O Messenger of Allah, who does refuse (to enter Jannah)? He (peace be upon him) said: Whoever obeys me will enter Jannah and whoever disobeys me

refuses (to enter Jannah).﴾

On the other hand, there are so many proofs for nullifying the act of reliance on astronomical calculations in verifying the birth of the moon. It is noteworthy that Abu Al-`Abbas Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), conveyed the Ijma` (consensus) of Muslim scholars on the impermissibility of depending on astronomical calculations to confirm the appearance of the new moon. Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), was one of those scholars who knew the best about scholars' consensus and disagreement. Such consensus complies with the Hadith quoted above. I hope that what I have mentioned here is sufficient and convincing to the seekers of truth. I ask Allah to guide us and all Muslims to His Straight Path, to grant us all the comprehensive understanding of His Religion and keep us firm on acting upon it. Verily, Allah is the All-Hearing, the Ever-Near! Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

26-

Whoever considers astronomical calculations as a condition for the validity of the moon sighting makes amendments to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him)

All Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, Companions, and those who follow his guidance!

I have read the article published by the Jordanian newspaper Al-Dustor, issued on 17 Ramadan, 1407 A.H., written by Dr. `Aly `Abnadah, Director of the General Observatories and member of the Committee of Timings in the Jordanian Ministry of Waqf (endowment). I have also read the article published in the Middle East newspaper, issued on 15 Dhul-Qa`dah, 1407 A.H., by Eng. Amin `Amir. I have also read the report attributed to Dr. Rashad Qabis, Director of Astronomical Research Institute, published by the Egyptian newspaper Al-Akhbar, issued on 1 Ramadan, 1407 A. H. May Allah forgive us and them! They all lay emphasis on relying upon astronomical calculations to confirm the beginning of the months. Dr. `Aly `Abnadah claimed that scientific facts prove that it is not possible at all to see the crescent of Ramadan on Monday night 27 April, 1987, since it has disappeared twenty minutes before sunset, based upon

the accurate astronomical calculations and the Islamic Hijri (lunar) calendar which most Islamic countries, including Jordan, approved of, etc.

Accordingly, I take it upon myself to point out to the readers the grave danger of this speech and challenging of the Religion of Allah and His Messenger as well as discarding the authentic Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and preferring astronomers' opinions and calculations to the rulings mentioned in the Book of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) which advocate suspending the verification of the beginning and ending of the month either through sighting the crescent or completing the thirty days.

The ruling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) applies to his time and the times that follow until the Day of Judgment. This is because Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) sent him to all mankind with a complete Shari`ah (Islamic law) that will never have shortcomings in any way. Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islâm as your religion.﴿ He (Glorified be He) knows that the astronomers may oppose the witness of the reliable people in sighting the new moons. He (Exalted be He) does not order His Servants in His Book or through His Messenger (peace be upon him), to rely upon astronomical calculations or make it a condition to the validity of sighting the moon. Whoever maintains this opinion makes amendments to

Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and sets out for Muslims a condition that has no basis in Allah's Purified Shar` (Law), meaning that the sighting should not contradict what the astronomers claim that the crescent may not appear or may not be seen.

The Sahih (authentic) Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) nullified this condition and relying upon either sighting the moon or completing the month as thirty days.

Allah commands His Servants, in case of dispute, to refer what they differ about to His Book (the Qur'an) or the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him) and to judge by His Ruling and His Prophet's. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge).﴿ And: ﴾But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.﴿ There are many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) which point out the obligation of relying on sighting the crescent to either confirm

the beginning of months or completing them to be thirty days. These are famous Hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and others. The ruling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not restricted to his time. Rather, it applies to all times until the Day of Judgment, for he is the Messenger of Allah to all mankind.

Allah (Glorified be He) sent him to all mankind and ordered him to convey to them what He legislates with regard to how to confirm the beginning of Ramadan. Allah is the All-Knowing of the Ghayb (the Unseen) of the heavens and earth and of the observatories that will take place after the time of the

Prophet (peace be upon him). It was not authentically proven that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) made the sighting of the crescent conditional upon agreeing with observatories or astronomical calculations.

Nothing whatsoever escapes His Knowledge in the heavens or in the earth, neither in the past nor in the future. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice) and held down his thumb the third time. Another month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice). Fast when you see it, and break your fast when you see it, and if it is cloudy calculate it (the month of Sha'ban) as thirty days.﴿ In another wording: ﴾"then complete the month with thirty days."﴿ In this way, he (peace be upon him) guides his Ummah (nation based on one creed) that the Hijri month may be at one time twenty nine days and at another time it may be thirty days.

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It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not fast (for Ramadan) before the coming of the month until you sight the moon or complete the number (of thirty days); then fast until you sight the moon or complete the number (of thirty days).﴿ He did not command us to make calculations to confirm the beginning of months. Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), has mentioned in this issue in his book entitled Al-Fatawa, vol. 25, p. 132, that there is Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) that it is not permissible to depend upon calculations to prove the beginning of the months. He (may Allah be merciful with him) was one of the most knowledgeable people in matters related to Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) and disagreement.

In his book entitled Al-Fath, part 4, p. 127, Al-Hafidh reported that Abu Al-Walid Al-Bajy said: "The Ijma` (consensus) of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) is that calculations should not be relied on, and their Ijma` (consensus) is a proof for those who come after them."

All the Sahih (authentic) Hadiths reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) support this Ijma` (consensus of scholars). I am not against using observatories or telescopes to sight the crescent, but I am against depending upon them or making them criteria for the beginning of the month to the extent that the sighting is not to be confirmed unless the observatories testify that the crescent has appeared. All these acts are null and void.

It is quite clear to whoever has any knowledge about the calculating

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astronomers that they mostly fall in dispute about confirming the sighting or not the new moon and about the places of sighting. If we supposed that there was an agreement of astronomers at a certain period upon sighting or not sighting the new moon, then their agreement could not be taken as a supporting evidence, for they are not infallible. Rather, they are all liable to committing mistakes. The infallible considered Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) is that of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) in the Shar`y(Islamically legal) issues, for when there is Ijma` among them on something, they are of the victorious party to which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) has testified that it will remain on Al-Haqq (the Truth) until the Day of Judgment.

However, the agreement or consensus of other scholars is not an evidence to oppose the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah as indicated in the books of Usul-ul-Fiqh (Principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and Mustalah Al-Hadith (Hadith terminology).

The sighting of the crescent of Ramadan in this year, i.e., 1407 A.H., on Tuesday night was confirmed by the Higher Judiciary Council in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is a Shar`y (Islamically lawful) sighting that should be relied upon, due to it being in conformity with the Shar`y

(Islamically lawful) evidence and for the invalidity of whatever opposes it. Accordingly, Tuesday is the first day of Ramadan, based upon the mentioned above Hadiths. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The fast is the day when you fast, and the breaking of the fast is the day when you break the fast, and `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is the day when you offer the sacrifice.") (Related by

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Al-Tirmidhy and others through a good Sanad (chain of narrators)

If we supposed that Muslims were mistaken in confirming the crescent at the beginning and end of the month, while relying upon the authentic reports in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), there would be no harm on them. Rather, they are to be hopefully rewarded and thanked, for relying upon what Allah has legislated for them and upon the authentic reports from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had they avoided this in favor of the saying of astronomical calculators, despite having the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence for sighting the moon at the beginning and the end of the month, they would be sinful and on the verge of a great danger of invoking Allah's Punishment, for having contradicted the outline of their Prophet and Master, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah. Allah (Exalted be He) warns against this matter in His Saying: (And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صلى ا لله عليه وسلم) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah - legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.)

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says:(And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allâh; verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.)

He (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: (And whosoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.)

I hope that what I mentioned is convincing to the seeker of Al-Haqq (Truth) and refutation of the doubtful matter raised by Dr. `Aly `Abnadah as well as others who rely upon

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the sayings of astronomical calculators and deny the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) sighting. May Allah (Exalted be He) guide these writers and all Muslims to all that benefits the people and countries and to remain adherent to Allah's Purified Shar` (Law), save us and all Muslims from the evils of ourselves and our bad deeds and from inventing lies against Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) without knowledge! Allah is the Guardian of this and the One Who is Capable of doing so! He is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs! May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Messenger Prophet, Muhammad, his family, Companions and whoever follows his guidance until the Day of Judgment!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly

Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance,

and Chairman of the Constitutional Council

of the Muslim World League

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27-

The report of the calculators should not be acted upon

and they should not confuse people

Q: What is the opinion of Your Eminence regarding the question of people who adopt calculations in sighting the crescent?

A: We should not act upon the saying of the people who calculate. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice), i.e., thirty days. The month is like this and this and this (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice) and held down his thumb the third time, i.e., twenty nine days.) He (peace be upon him) also said: (Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break your fast until you see the new moon; but if it is cloudy, complete the month to be thirty days)

As for astronomical calculators, they should not be given any attention and their reports should not be relied upon as well.

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They must be prevented from publishing their calculation reports, whether related to sighting the crescent or solar eclipse for they would be confusing people. Further, it is not permissible to act upon their sayings. Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah, (may Allah be merciful with him), conveyed the Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) that the opinion based on calculations is not to be considered in the beginning orat the end of Ramadan.

Astronomical calculations should not be relied upon

One witness is sufficient

in proving the beginning of Ramadan

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, shaykh S. A. L., may Allah guide him to what pleases Him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your letter concerning the impossibility of sighting the crescent of Shawwal on Thursday night in the Gulf region. I would like to inform you that the Shar`y (Islamic lawful) evidence and the Ijma` (consensus) of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) pointed out that we should not rely on astronomical calculations. What should be considered is sighting the crescent or completing the month as thirty days. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not fast until you see the new moon or otherwise complete the month as thirty days, and do not break your fast until you see the new moon or otherwise complete the month as thirty days.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾"Fast on sighting it (the new moon) and break your fasting on sighting it (the new moon); but if it is clouded from you,

complete the term (of stipulated fasting days) as thirty."﴿ In another narration, he said: ﴾Then fast for thirty days.﴿ There are so many Hadiths to the same effect.

The sighting of the new moon on the night of Thursday was confirmed by more than two witnesses. Thus, you came to know that astronomical calculations should not be relied upon and two witnesses are enough to confirm the beginning or end of Ramadan. Rather, one witness is sufficient to confirm the beginning of Ramadan. Allah (Exalted be He) says in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an: ﴾O you who believe! Make not (a decision) in advance before Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and fear Allâh. Verily! Allâh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿ May Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) grant us, you, and all Muslim brothers the useful knowledge, help us act upon it and remain adherent to it! He is the Best One to be asked for help!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly

Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

When the sighting of the crescent moon becomes Shar`y confirmed

that we should act accordingly

and is impermissible to render it conditional on Kusuf or any other thing

All praise be to Allah, may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, Companions and whoever follows his guidance! To proceed: I read what was published in "Al-Nadwah" newspaper in its issue dated 23/8/1405 A.H., on the authority of the astronomer called Habib `Ulwy Al-Husayn concerning his assertive declaration on the occurrence of Kusuf (Solar eclipse) on Monday night 30/8/1405 A.H., according to the timing of Makkah. According to his declaration, it would be impossible to sight the crescent moon that night on the account of Kusuf. Consequently, Tuesday will be the first day of Ramadan ...etc.

But, since the Messenger (peace be upon him) made the confirmation of the birth of the crescent moons conditional upon sighting them or completing the days to be thirty, his ruling (peace be upon him) is the one to prevail at all times until the Day of Resurrection; for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has sent him to all mankind with a perfect Shari`ah (Islamic law) that could by no means be tinged with any aspect of imperfection, as

Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islâm as your religion.﴾ Although He (Glorified be He) knows all about the occurrence of Kusuf at all times, He prescribed for His Servants through His Messenger (peace be upon him) the allowed things they can do at the time of Kusuf with respect to Salah (Prayer) and other acts. He has not told them to put its occurrence into consideration on confirming the birth of the crescent moons. The claim of some astronomers that Kusuf occurs only at the end of the month on waning-moon nights is not supported by reliable evidence, besides that the authentic Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) should not accordingly be contradicted for this. Some scientists declared that Kusuf could happen anytime other than the end of the month, and Allah (Glorified be He) is All-Able to do anything!

Having it accustomed to occur at the end of the month, does not necessarily prevent the occurrence of Kusuf at any other time. Also, due to the possibility that some people may doubt to act in accordance with the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) because of the claims made by astronomers, which might lead people to deny the just evidence of sighting the crescent moon, I found out that I should warn people on this matter to clarify the truth, ward off any doubtful matter, support the Prophetic law and defend its ruling on this important matter which concerns all Muslims.

Accordingly; I declare that the Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stipulating the obligation of verifying the birth of the crescent moon either by sight or by the completion of the thirty days of the month are well known, authentic and elaborate. The ruling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) cannot be specified to a certain period of time. Rather, it prevails at all times until the Day of Resurrection, since he is the Messenger of Allah to all mankind. Allah (Glorified be He) has sent His Prophet to people and commanded him to inform them of His Shar' (law) in regard to the verification of the birth of the crescent moon of Ramadan. Over and above, Allah is the All-Knowing of Ghayb (Unseen) of all earths and heavens and whatever of Kusuf is going to happen. Yet, it has not been authentically proven that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) conditioned the action in accordance with the sight (of the crescent moon) on the approval of an observatory or the nonexistence of Kusuf, though His Knowledge of anything on the earth or in heaven can never sink into oblivion (Glorified be He); not in the past or at any other time until the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾We are an unlettered nation; we neither write, nor calculate. The month is this, and this and that (holding down his thumb in the third time)﴿ while pointing with his ten fingers to guide his Ummah (nation based on one creed) that the month would be sometimes twenty nine days and at others it would be thirty. It is also authentically reported that he

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(peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not fast until you sight the crescent moon or complete the month (i.e., the thirty days), and do not break the fast until you sight it or complete the month﴿ Yet, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command people to refer to calculations to verify the beginnings of months.

Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him), declared in a thesis, which he compiled on this issue, as mentioned in volume 25 of Fatawa p. 132 that: Scholars declared by Ijma` (consensus of scholars) that it is not permissible to act in accordance with calculations in confirming the birth of the moons. Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him) was one of the most knowledgeable people in matters related to Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) and disagreement.

All the authentic Hadiths reported from the Prophet support the mentioned Ijma`. However, I do not intend to prohibit referring to the observatories, but what I mean is not to rely on them or deem them as the sole criteria for confirming the sight, that becomes impossible to confirm except by their approval or declaration of the birth of the crescent moon, for this is undoubtedly void. It is clear to anyone who happens to be in contact with the astronomical calculators that they frequently engage in dispute with each other concerning the issue of the moon's birth as well as the ability or the disability to sight it. If we assumed that they have all agreed on its birth, their unanimous agreement cannot be taken as a proof, since they are not infallible.

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Rather, he infallible Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars) that should be considered is that of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) scholars in Shar`y (Islamically lawful) matters, as by their consensus they will fall under the victorious group which the Prophet (peace be upon him) testified in their favor to be holding fast to truth until the Day of Resurrection. As for the claim of some scientists that Khusuf (lunar eclipse) only occurs on the moonlit nights or that it only takes place on the waning nights, it is one of the weakest evidence, as there is no Islamic texts either from the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Messenger (peace be upon him) to support this claim. On the other hand, others have declared that it might happen at anytime; it has been mentioned by more than one person that this could even happen on the days of `Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast) or `Eid-ul-Adha (the

Festival of the Sacrifice), provided that they are not of the days on which the moon wanes. Accordingly, we take this opinion against that of those who claim its occurrence on the moonlit nights and waning days. No opinion is prevalent over the other. Yet, we have the indisputable Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence. As far as we are concerned, nothing in Allah's Shar` (law) or His Power prevents the occurrence of Kusuf at anytime since Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has the Utmost Power over everything, and the Perfect Wisdom in all what He decrees and prescribes for His Servants. Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) reported that Kusuf and Khusuf are two Signs of Allah which He sends to warn His Servants.

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Allah's Servants are in dire need of warning and threats from the causes of torment at all times. This meaning in itself is one of the evidence indicating the validity of the opinion of the scientists who advocated the permissibility of the occurrence of Khusuf and Kusuf at anytime.

The confirmation of the sighting of Sha`ban's crescent moon on Saturday night this year was established by the testimony of two upright witnesses and the approval of the permanent members of the Supreme Judicial Council in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is a reliable Shar`y (Islamically lawful) sighting. Therefore, it should be counted on in the observance and breaking of Sawm (Fast), since it complies with the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence. Thus, whatever contradicts it should also be considered null. Accordingly, Monday will be the first day of Ramadan unless the crescent moon is sighted on Sunday based on the Hadiths mentioned above and according to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾Start fasting on sighting it (i.e., the crescent moon of Ramadan), and give up fasting on sighting it (i.e., the crescent moon of Shawwal), but if the sky overcasts, complete the thirty days of Sha`ban﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾The beginning of Sawm (fast) is the day when you all begin to fast, and breaking the Fast is the day when you all break it, and Al-Ad-ha (i.e., `Eid-ul-Ad-ha) is the day when you all sacrifice﴿ (Related by Al-Tirmidhy and others with a good Isnad (chain of narrators.) I hope I have been able to convince the seeker of truth and eliminate the doubtful matter mentioned in the preface of this speech. Allah (Glorified be He)

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is the Source of success! He is Sufficient for us and is the Best Disposer of our Affairs! May peace and blessings be upon His Servant and Messenger, our Prophet and leader Muhammad, his family and Companions!

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

and Chairman of the Constitutional Council of the

Muslim World League in Makkah Al-Mukarramah

There is no consideration in the Purified Shar` to the

Lunar mansions or the size of the moons

All Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah. To proceed:

Allah (Glorified be He) has willed that the confirmation of the sighting of the moon of Shawwal this year, namely 1389 A.H., would be established on the night of the thirtieth of Ramadan by the testimony of two upright witnesses. Consequently, the ruler approved it and ordained for people to break their Sawm (Fast) accordingly. So people broke their Sawm (Fast) in these countries on account of that Shar`y (Islamically lawful) sighting. Furthermore, Allah has destined for the mansions of the crescent moon at the beginning of Shawwal to be feeble, in addition to some people in the East who sighted the crescent moon before sunrise of the twenty ninth day, which resulted in the raising of doubt regarding the breaking of Sawm (Fast) that some people observed and asked me about.

Therefore, I want to write a word about this matter on which I would declare the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) ruling hoping to remove any confusion occurring to anyone on its account.

Thus I declare: It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)

said: (Start fasting on seeing it (i.e., the crescent moon [of Ramadan]), and give up fasting on seeing it (i.e., that of Shawwal), and if the sky overcasts, base your calculations on thirty (i.e., days of Sha`ban)) In another wording: (then complete the thirty days) It is also authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) said: ("We are an unlettered Ummah (nation of creed); we neither write, nor know calculations. The month is like this and this and that", putting down his thumb on the third time. Then he (peace be upon him) said: "The month is like this and this and that") In his first allusion, the Prophet meant that the month could be twenty nine, and in the second he meant that it might also be thirty days. He (peace be upon him) said: (Do not fast until you see the crescent moon, and do not break the fast until you see it; but if the sky overcasts, complete the month (i.e., to be thirty days)) Furthermore, he (peace be upon him) said: (Do not fast (for Ramadan) before the beginning of the month until you sight the moon or complete the number (i.e., thirty days); then fast and do not stop fasting until you sight the moon or complete the thirty days (i.e., of the month)) .

Ahmad and Al-Nasa`y related with a Hassan (good) Isnad (chain of narrators) on the authority of `Abdul-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with them both) through a group of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah that he (peace be upon him) said: (Start fasting when you see it (i.e., the crescent moon of Ramadan)

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and break your fast when you see it, and sacrifice on account of this, but if the sky overcasts, complete the thirty (i.e., days of the month), and if two witnesses testify (i.e., of sighting the crescent moon; then you should fast (i.e., at the beginning of the month) and break your fast (i.e., at the end of the month)) .

There are many Hadiths to the same effect, and they all clarify to the Ummah (nation based on one creed) that no consideration should be given to calculations, lunar mansions, size of the crescent moons, or its sighting before the sunrise of the twenty ninth day, either in a descending or ascending position. Rather, what should be counted is the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) sighting either after Maghrib (Sunset Prayer) or the completion of the month. If the feebleness of the lunar mansions, the size of the crescent moons or its sight in the East before the Sunset of the twenty ninth day had been of influence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have warned people of it and clarified it to people, for he (peace be upon him) is the most sincere and able to clarify such a thing for them. Furthermore, Allah (Exalted be He) made it an obligation upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) to inform people of that which He revealed for them. Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did it most perfectly.

It is well known for any wise person that the crescent moons differ a lot according to their distance from the sun, the clarity of the weather and the variance of people's sight. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) made such a serious matter contingent either on sighting or the completion of the month without rendering it conditional on any other element. Accordingly, it is clearly recognized that anyone who stipulates the sighting on a third factor, will be instituting in the Din (religion of Islam) that which

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Allah has never ordained. Regarding His denunciation of this act, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If anyone innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not a part of it, will have it rejected) .

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advocated and clarified this matter using another way of declaration when he (peace be upon him) said: (The beginning of Sawm (fast) is the day when you begin to fast, and Fitr (breaking of fast) is the day when you break it, and `Eid ul-Ad-ha is the day when you sacrifice) (Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhy on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) with a Hassan (good) Isnad (chain of narrators), but Abu Dawud did not mention the word "Sawm"). Al-Tirmidhy also related with a good Isnad on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (The Fitr (breaking of Fast) is the day when people break the fast, and `Eid ul-Ad-ha is the day when people sacrifice) Imam Muslim (may Allah be merciful to him) related in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about the crescent moon: (Verily Allah extended it to be seen.) And in another narration: (Verily Allah extended it to be seen, so if

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the sky overcasts, you should complete the number (the thirty days of the month)) Imam Al-Nawawy (may Allah be merciful to him) interpreted it saying: The chapter on the declaration concerning that there should be no consideration to the size of the crescent moon, and that Allah has extended it to

be seen, so if the sky overcasts, they should complete the thirtieth day.

Abu Wa'il Shaqiq ibn Salamah said: We received the letter of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that some of the crescent moons are bigger than others. So if you sight the crescent moon do not break Sawm (Fast) until two Muslim men have testified to have seen it yesterday. Imam Al-Nawawy (may Allah be merciful to him) added: Related by Al-Daraqutny and Al-Bayhaqy with an authentic Isnad... End quote.

Shaykh-ul-Islam Abu Al-`Abbas ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful to him) mentioned in a thesis he wrote about the crescent moons and was transcribed by the knowledgeable Shaykh `Abdul-Rahman ibn Qasim in the twenty fifth volume of the compiled Fatawa, p. 132 what reads: "It is known by necessity in the religion of Islam that actions are contingent on the crescent moon with regard to Sawm (Fast), Hajj (Pilgrimage), `Iddah (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood), Ila' (husband's oath not to have intercourse with his wife for four months or more) or any other rulings that happen to be dependant upon the crescent moon. Thus, any information concerning its sight based upon calculations is not permissible. The elaborate texts reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard are numerous. Muslims also agreed unanimously upon this without any dispute among the earliest scholars... Shaykh-ul-Islam Abu Al-`Abbas ibn Taymiyyah continued until he said in p. 136 that: Therefore, what is intended is

that the timings have been established by a clear matter that is shared by all people. Nothing shares the crescent moon in this matter...Ibn Taymiyyah added: "It became apparent that there is not any known and apparent limit for timing except the crescent moon.

He (may Allah be merciful to him) mentioned some wonders in this thesis and elaborated on this issue. If it was not for the fear of prolongation, I would have transcribed much of it for the reader. However, praise be to Allah, it is available upon request. It is known from the evidence and some of the opinions of the people of knowledge which we mentioned that the lunar mansions and the size of the crescent moons as well as its sighting before sunrise of the twenty ninth day in addition to basing the calculation of the months on their advent and departure should not be considered and counted. Rather, it is contradicting with the evidence and Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars), and this is what is required. I hope this would be sufficient and convincing to the truth seeker as it would be clarifying any arising ambiguity. Allah is the One to be sought for help for He is the Granter of success! There is neither might nor power except with Allah! May peace and blessings be upon His Servant and Messenger our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Vice President of the Islamic University

Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

31- Completion of thirty days of Jumada II and Rajab does not mark the incompletion of Sha‘ban

Q: If Jumada II and Rajab were full 30-day months and the new moon could not be sighted on the 29th of Sha‘ban, should we act upon the most likely case which is the incompletion of the third month i.e., Sha‘ban will be 29 days in length?

A: It is not permissible to start observing Sawm (Fasting) except after ascertaining the beginning of the new month, either by completing thirty days of Sha'ban or by sighting the new moon. No consideration should be given to whether the sky is cloudy or to whether some months are complete or incomplete, because the reliance is on sighting the new moon or completing thirty days of Sha'ban.

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32- There is no harm in the unification of calendars through astronomical calculations to rely upon them in administrative issues, but not in Sawm (Fasting) or breaking Sawm

All praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds! May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the master of all prophets and messengers; our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions! To proceed: I headed the sixth session of the unification of the Hijri calendar symposium which was held in Makkah starting from Tuesday 10/1/1406 A.H up to 12 /1/1406 A.H.

There have been statements in these sessions to explain the beginnings of the lunar months for the two years 1407 A.H. and 1408 A.H. as well as the beginnings of five months from the year1409 A.H. according to the calculation used by astrologists. I did not sign the statements and tables lest that the people who use it think that I agree upon verifying Sawm (Fast), breaking Sawm and the Shar`y (Islamic legal) rulings through astronomical calculations.

I informed the Committee about my view and explained to its members that the act of verifying the beginnings of months and the Shar`y (Islamic legal) rulings must be done through sighting the moon or the completion of the Hijri months as stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in many authentic Hadiths such as: (Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (Do not fast (for Ramadan) before the coming of the month until you sight the moon or complete the number (of thirty days); then fast until you sight the moon or complete the number (of thirty days).) (Related by Al-Nasa'y and Abu Dawud with an authentic chain of narration) In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (We are an unlettered people who can neither write nor count. The month is thus, and thus (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice), folding his thumb when he said it the third time. Another month is thus and thus and thus (showing the fingers of both his hands thrice), i.e. completely thirty days.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. This is the wording of Imam Muslim)

There are many Hadiths to the same effect.

As for the unification of the calendar through astronomical calculations, there is no harm in relying upon them in administrative matters and the like. I found it proper to publish this report for the sake of clarification, advice and discharging the responsibility. May Allah guide all Muslims to that which pleases Him for He is the Most Generous! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

General Chairman

of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

The Ruling on the person who fasted thirty one days in Ramadan

Q: His Eminence Shaykh! What is the ruling on the person who fasted at the beginning of Ramadan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia then traveled to another country in which the beginning of the month was delayed, does he have to fast one extra day as a make up?

A: He has to fast and break his Sawm (Fast) with them even if he will fast more days according to the previously mentioned Hadith which reads: (The beginning of Ramadan is on the day when you begin fasting, the end of Ramadan is on the day when you end it.)

Q: I am from a country in East Asia, where the Islamic Hijri month is a day behind the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We, students in Saudi Arabia, are going to travel to our homeland during Ramadan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Start fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing it (the new moon of Shawwal).﴿ **We started fasting in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but at the end of the month we will have fasted thirty one days. Hence, what is the ruling on our Sawm (Fast), and how many days we should fast?**

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A: If you start Sawm (Fast) in Saudi Arabia or anywhere else, then you fast the rest of the month in your homeland, break your Sawm (Fast) when they do even if that is more than thirty days. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾ Beginning of Ramadan is the first day for fasting, and the end of it is the day fasting ends. ﴿ However, if you did not complete twenty nine days, you must complete that (number of fasting days). This is because a month can not be less than twenty nine days. May Allah grant us success!

The Ruling on fasting Ramadan

as twenty eight days only

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, His Eminence Shaykh Al-Azhar Jad Al-Haqq `Aly Jad Al-Haqq, may Allah guide him to what pleases Him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) To proceed:

I was informed through the attached leaflet about the declaration of Your Eminence to Al-Akhbar newspaper and which included the denunciation of Sawm (Fast) as twenty eight days and then making up for the first day of Ramadan as a mistake in verifying that it is the first day of Ramadan... etc.

I tell Your Eminence that I was astonished because of what this attachment included as I know that Your Eminence is known for knowledge and virtue and that such an event can not be far from your knowledge. In addition, it was proven in the authentic Hadiths that the month cannot come less than twenty nine days and whenever the new moon of Shawal is proven with Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence after Muslims' Fast for twenty eight days, this means that they

broke their Sawm (Fast) on the first day of Ramadan so they have to fast it to make it up. This is because the month cannot be twenty eight days. Rather, it can be either twenty nine or thirty days.

It was mentioned by Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah, in part (25) of his Fatawa (legal opinions issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) pp. 154-15 that this act took place during the time of `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) that they fasted twenty eight days and `Aly asked them to fast the day they missed and to complete the month to be twenty nine days.

So, I hope you inform the newspaper of the right opinion if Your Eminence issued otherwise. No doubt, Your Eminence is worthy of trust and respect and uncountable numbers of people will accept and depend upon your Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar)

As we have to advise and recommend one another to what is right and to cooperate to do good and to be pious, I write to Your Eminence in this regard. Allah is the Only One who can guide us all to what is right in sayings and deeds and make us and you among the guided persons who guide others to the Straight Path, for Allah is the Most Generous, All-Bountiful! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Q: Is it permissible to fast only twenty eight days in Ramadan?

A: It was proven in a great number of Sahaih (authentic) Hadiths from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that a month can not be less than twenty nine days. When it is confirmed with Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence that the month of Shawwal has started after Muslims have fasted twenty eight days only, this means that they did not fast the first day of Ramadan. Therefore, they must make up for it, because it is not possible for the month to be twenty eight days. The month is either twenty nine or thirty days.

35 - Completing Ramadan as thirty days every year

Q: What is the ruling of Allah and His Messenger on people who always complete Ramadan as thirty days in fasting and do not decrease it at all?

A: This act is incorrect; rather, it is an evil act that disagrees with the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the actions of the household of the Prophet and others (may Allah be pleased with all of them), due to Allah's (Exalted be He) saying:

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﴿They ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage.﴾ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴿And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴾ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴿Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the term as thirty (days of Sha`ban.)﴾ In another narration, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ﴿Observe fasting for thirty days.﴾ According to another narration: ﴿Then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban).﴾ Thus, all these Ayahs and Hadiths prove that it is an obligation to follow the new moons to establish the beginning and end of the month and if the month is completed as thirty days according to the moon sighting, people should fast for thirty days and if it is only twenty-nine days, then they should fast for twenty-nine days only. There are many Hadiths authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indicating that the month might be twenty-nine days sometimes and it might be thirty days some other times, and therefore, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded us to follow the moon sighting and to complete the month as thirty days if the moon is not sighted on the night of the thirtieth of Sha'ban or on the thirtieth night of Ramadan.

Thus, no one may follow his own opinion and say that the month is always thirty days, because such a saying is in contradiction and disagreement with the sound and authentic Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Moreover, it is

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in discordance with the unanimous opinion of Muslim scholars, since all of them unanimously agree that the lunar month might be twenty-nine days and it might be thirty days, and the reality testifies to that and everyone interested in this issue knows this fact. Allah (Glorified be He) also says in His Glorious Book: ﴿O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴾ Scholars of Tafsir

(explanation/exegesis of the meanings of the Qur'an) and others said that referring an issue to Allah means to refer it to the His Holy Book and referring an issue to the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) means referring it to him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during his lifetime and to his sound and authentic Sunnah after his death. We have already explained to you the evidence from the Book of Allah and from the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the consensus of opinion of Muslim scholars that the month might be twenty-nine days and it might be thirty days. Therefore, no one is allowed to go against this original foundation. Allah is the One sought for help, and He is sufficient for us and the Best Disposer of all affairs.

Q: What is the ruling on those who continually observe fasting the month of Ramadan as thirty days?

A: The Sahih (authentic) Hadiths from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the consensus of the Prophet's Companions and that of those who follow them in righteousness from amongst the scholars that the month

can be either thirty or twenty nine days. So, whoever fasts Ramadan continually as thirty days without considering the new moons then they contradict the Sunnah and the Ijma` (consensus of scholars) and made an innovation in the religion that Allah did not allow. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾Follow what has been sent down unto you from your Lord (the Qur'ân and Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah), and follow not any Auliyâ' (protectors and helpers who order you to associate partners in worship with Allâh), besides Him (Allâh).﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) also says: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to mankind): "If you (really) love Allâh then follow me (i.e. accept Islâmic Monotheism, follow the Qur'ân and the Sunnah), Allâh will love you and forgive you your sins.﴿ In a third verse, Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allâh; verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.﴿ Further, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾These are the limits (set by) Allâh (or ordainments as regards laws of inheritance), and whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) will be admitted to Gardens under

which rivers flow (in Paradise), to abide therein, and that will be the great success.) (And whosoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.) There are many Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) to the same effect. It was related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) through the Hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Fast when you see it, and break your fast when you see it. If the weather is cloudy, calculate it (the months of Sha'ban or Shawwal as thirty days.)) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) In another narration by Muslim it reads: (calculate the month to be thirty days.) In another wording in

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the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) it reads: (Whenever you sight the new moon (of the month of Ramadan) observe fast. and when you sight it (the new moon of Shawwal) break it, and if the sky is cloudy for you, then observe fast for thirty days.) It is related in Sahih Al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Start fasting on seeing the new moon (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the new moon (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), fast thirty days of (Ramadan).) In another wording it reads: (then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban).) And in a third wording it reads: (then complete the thirty days (of Sha'ban).)

It is narrated on the authority of Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break your fast until you see it; but if the weather is cloudy, calculate the month to be thirty days) (Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Nasa'y with a good chain of narration)

It was authentically narrated in several Hadiths that the Prophet (peace and be upon him) said: (The month (can be) 29 nights (i.e., days), and do not fast until you see the moon, and if the sky is overcast, then complete Sha'ban as thirty days.) Further, it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

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(The month is like this and this," (at the same time he showed the fingers of both his hands thrice) and left out one thumb on the third time. Then he said: The month is like this and this and this.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) used his ten fingers and left out nothing of them. He means that some times the month is thirty days and at other times twenty nine. The people of knowledge and Iman (faith/belief) from among the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Companions and those who followed them in righteousness have received these Sahaih (authentic) Hadiths with consent and submission and acted upon them. They used to sight the new moons of Sha`ban, Ramadan and Shawwal and act in accordance with the evidence which indicates the completion or incompletion of the month. So, all Muslims have to follow this right way and shun away from the opposite views and new Bid`ah (innovation in religion) to be among those to whom Allah promised Paradise as well as His Pleasure. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (And the foremost to embrace Islâm of the Muhâjirûn (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansâr (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhâjirûn) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.)

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Those for whom fasting is obligatory

and valid excuses for breaking the fast

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Fasting is obligatory for every Mukallaf

Q: For whom is fasting Ramadan obligatory? What is the virtues of fasting Ramadan and of voluntary fasting?

A: Fasting is obligatory for every Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) man and woman, and it is recommended that seven-year old or more male and female children observe the fast if it is not difficult for them. In case they can endure it, their parents should command them to fast just as they command them to offer Salah (Prayers). This is originally based on Allah's (Glorified and Exalted be He) saying: ﴿O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2: 2).﴾ ﴿[Observing Saum (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴾ Until Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴾ Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

﴾Islam was based on five pillars: Testimony that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah, giving Zakah; fasting Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage)﴿ . Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) and the Prophet (peace be upon him), when asked by Jibril Gabriel) about Islam, said: ﴾Islam involves that you testify that none is (truly) worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish prayer, pay Zakah, fast Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (Sacred) House if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of the journey).﴿ Reported by Muslim in the hadith of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported its meaning in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Besides, it was narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever fasts Ramadan out of sincere faith, hoping to attain Allah's Reward, all his past sins will be forgiven.﴿ It was also authentically narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says: All the deeds of the children of Adam are for them;

good deeds will be rewarded ten times to seven hundred times each, except for fasting, which is for Me, and I alone will give the reward for it. For, one abandons his (sexual) desire, food and drink for My Sake. There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts; one when he breaks the fast and the other when he meets his Lord. Indeed, the odor of the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter to Allah than the smell of musk﴿ Agreed upon as authentic by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. There are many other well-known hadiths regarding the virtues of fasting Ramadan and of fasting in general. May Allah grant us all success.

37. Interpretation of Almighty Allah's (Glorified and Exalted be He) saying:

﴾And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed﴿

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to His Royal Highness Prince Salman ibn `Abdul `Aziz, governor of Riyadh, may Allah grant you success and increase your knowledge and faith. Amen!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I am writing to you regarding your oral question about the interpretation of the verse, in which Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, ﴾ **And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskin (poor person) (for every day).** But, whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you know.﴿ **Since your Highness asked me to present the answer in writing, it is my pleasure to respond to your request.** Exegetes (may Allah be merciful with them) mentioned that when Allah (Exalted be He) legislated fasting Ramadan, He (Exalted be He) allowed His Servants to choose between breaking the fast and feeding (poor persons), or fasting. However, He (Exalted be He) clarified that fasting is better. Hence, whoever breaks his fasting while he be able to fast has to feed a poor person (for each day) - knowing that if he feeds more than one person it would be better for him - without making up for the missed days of

fasting. However, it is still better for him that he fasts,

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since Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, (And that you fast is better for you if only you know.) As for the sick people and travelers, they are permitted to break their fast and make up for the missed days, as Allah (Exalted be He) says, (but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.) Afterwards, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) abrogated the previous rulings and obligated fasting Ramadan on every sane, adult, healthy and resident person. Besides, He (Exalted be He) permitted the sick people and travelers to break their fast, but they must make up for the missed days; as He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, (The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.) Feeding (a poor person for each day) is only permitted for the elderly people who are unable to fast, as it was authentically reported from Ibn `Abbas, Anas ibn Malik and a group of the Companions and righteous predecessors (may Allah be pleased with them all). Al-Bukhari also reported in his Sahih on the authority of Salamah ibn Al-Akwa` (may Allah be pleased with him) the abrogation of the honorable verse in which Almighty Allah (Exalted be He) says, (And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskîn (poor person) (for every day).)

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The same was reported on the authority of Mu`adh ibn Jabal and a group of the righteous predecessors (may Allah be merciful with them all). Similar to the elderly are the sick who are not expected to recover in that they should feed a poor person for every day without having to make up for the missed fasting days.

It is also permissible to feed the poor at the beginning, middle or end of the month. As for pregnant and breast-feeding women, they should fast. Yet, if they actually find fasting too much of a burden, they should break their fast and make up for the missed days, just as the sick people and travelers. This is the more preponderant of the two opinions given by scholars. Here, a group of the righteous predecessors stated that they [pregnant and breast-feeding women] should feed without making up for the missed days, like the elderly people. However, the right opinion is that the same ruling of the sick people and travelers applies to them, i.e. they are permitted to break their fast and make up for the missed days. Here, the hadith authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Al-Ka`by indicate that they have the same ruling of the sick people and travelers.

Finally, I ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to give us and you the ability to understand His Religion and to make us firm on the Right Path. May Allah make us, you and all Muslim fellows among those whom He has guided (to the Right Path) and among those who guide others. He is indeed All-Hearer and Ever-Near. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

President of the Administration of Scholarly Research,

38. Reaching puberty, which has specific indications, makes fasting Ramadan an obligation

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother H.S.H., may Allah sustain him,

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

With reference to your question recorded in the Administration of Scholarly Research and Ifta', No. 1180 and dated 23 Jumada Al-Awwal, 1407 A.H., in which you stated, "I have a 13-year old daughter and we conventionally believe that girls only have to fast when they are fifteen years old, but some people said that girls have to fast when they begin to have menstrual periods. Then, when we asked my daughter (about menstruation), she said that the menstrual period started with her three years before, when she was ten years old. So, we want to know the truth, should a girl fast when she is fifteen years old or when she begins to menstruate? And if girls to fast when they begin their menstrual periods, do they have to make up for missed fast during these three years, knowing that we are really ignorant about this matter and we lack sure knowledge about it? Please, we gratefully hope that you kindly give us an answer.

Answer: I would like to inform you that upon reaching the age of puberty, a girl has to fast, knowing that puberty is known through one of the following indicators: reaching fifteen years old, starting menstrual periods, the development of stiff pubic hair, or the flow of female secretion out of lust either when awake or asleep, if her age is under fifteen. Therefore, she has to make up for the days missed since she started to have menstrual periods and she also has to make Kaffarah (expiation); to feed a Miskin (needy) for every day she missed because of delay in making up for these days until next Ramadan, knowing that the food for every Miskin is half of Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of staple foodstuff in one's country. However, if she is poor and cannot offer food, she is not required to do so and then fasting will be sufficient. May Allah guide us all to that which pleases Him.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

President of the Administrations of Scholarly Research,

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39. For whom is fasting non-obligatory

Q: For whom is fasting non-obligatory? Enlighten us on this issue, may Allah best reward you.

A: The insane, senile, and the boys and girls who have not reached the age of puberty do not have to fast, except for women who have menstrual periods or postpartum periods, as fasting is obligatory for them. However, they should not fast in Ramadan or in any other month during these periods, and they have to make up for the days missed in Ramadan. As for the sick and the traveler, they may fast or break their fast in Ramadan, though it is better for them to break their fast and then to make up for these days later, as Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ However, if the sick persons suffer from diseases that trustworthy doctors believe to be incurable, then fasting or making up for it up would not be obligatory for them, but they only have to feed a needy person for every day; it is about half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple foodstuff in their country, i.e. about one and a half kilograms. Besides, an old man or woman who cannot fast have to do the same, as they do not have to fast or make up for it, and it is permissible for them to give Kaffarah (expiation)

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for all the days of Ramadan at one time, at the beginning or the end of or during Ramadan, to one or more needy people. This ruling applies for pregnant and breastfeeding women, if fasting is too difficult for them, and they have to make up for the days missed, just as sick people should do.

40. The ruling on the fasting and worship of someone who does not perform Salah

Q: There are some people who fast and perform some worship acts but they do not offer Salah (Prayer), is their fasting and worship accepted?

A: In the Name of Allah, all praise be to Him Alone. The right opinion is that a person who deliberately abandons Salah is committing a major disbelief, and thus his fasting and worship are not accepted until he repents to Allah (Glorified be He), for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.) There are also other verses and hadiths that maintain the same meaning. Some scholars viewed that a person who abandons Salah deliberately is not a disbeliever and that his fasting and worship are not rejected if he still believes that Salah is obligatory, but he abandons it only out of laziness and negligence. However, the correct opinion is the first one, namely that a person becomes a disbeliever if

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he deliberately abandons it even if he still believes it is obligatory, as there are many proofs on that, such as the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: (What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandonment of Salah.) Reported by Muslim in his Sahih in the hadith of Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) and his (peace be upon him) saying: (That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. Thus, he who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.)

Reported by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) through an authentic chain of narration in the hadith of Buraydah ibn Al-Husayb Al-Aslamy (may Allah be pleased with him).

The notable scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him) elaborated on this issue in a separate treatise about the rulings on Salah and abandonment of it, which is a useful treatise and it is recommended to refer to it.

41. Advice to those who, out of laziness, abandon prayer but observe fasting

Q. Some young men, may Allah guide them, abandon prayer in Ramadan and in other months out of laziness, but they observe fasting in Ramadan,

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enduring hunger and thirst. What is your advice to them, and what is the ruling on their fasting?

A. I advise those young men to consider their own condition carefully and to know that prayer is the most important pillar in Islam, second to the two testimonies of faith. For, one who does not offer prayer or abandons it out of laziness is a disbeliever who has apostated from Islam. This is, I believe, the preponderant opinion that is corroborated by proofs from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. So, the fast, alms, or any other worship act observed by such persons is not accepted, as Allah (Exalted be He) states, ﴿And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allâh and in His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and that they came not to As-Salât (the prayer) except in a lazy state, and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly.﴾ Thus, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) points out that though their alms are of benefit to others, it is not accepted from them, as they are disbelievers, and Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴿And We shall turn to whatever deeds they (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners) did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.﴾ Hence, those who fast but do not offer prayer, their fasting is rejected as is indicated in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Therefore, I advise them to fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and hold fast to prayer on

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time and in congregation, with the rest of the Muslims. If they do so, I am sure they will then find a strong passion in their hearts in Ramadan and in other months to offer prayer on time and in congregation. When one repents to Allah sincerely and comes back to him, he might be better after repentance than he was before, as was the case with Adam (peace be upon him) when he ate from the tree and then repented. In this regard, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴿But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.﴾

Q. What is the ruling on the fasting of one who offers prayer in Ramadan only or fasts but does not offer prayer?

A. Anyone who is judged to be a disbeliever will have his deeds rejected, as Allah (Exalted be He) states, ﴾But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.﴿ He (Exalted be He) also states, ﴾And whosoever disbelieves in Faith [i.e. in the Oneness of Allâh and in all the other Articles of Faith i.e. His (Allâh's) Angels, His Holy Books, His Messengers, the Day of Resurrection and Al-Qadar (Divine Preordainments)], then fruitless is his work; and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers.﴿ Besides, some scholars hold that those who abandon prayer are not full disbelievers if they believe it is obligatory. This will be considered a minor disbelief, which is still

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worse and more heinous than theft and adultery and the like. And though their fasting and pilgrimage are accepted if performed correctly, those who do not hold fast to prayer are in great danger of falling into major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity), as is maintained by a group of scholars. Most scholars are reported to be holding that those who abandon prayer out of laziness or negligence do not commit major Kufr (disbelief), but they are rather lapsing into minor Kufr, which is still a grave sin and terrible abomination that is more serious than adultery, theft, filial undutifulness, or drinking intoxicants, may Allah safeguard us! However, the correct of the two opinions held by scholars is that it is major Shirk - may Allah safeguard us! - as is maintained through legal proofs introduced above. Hence, those who fast but do not offer prayer, their fasting and pilgrimage are null and void.

42. The ruling on forcing the discerning child to fast

Q. Should the discerning children be ordered to fast? Besides, is it (fasting) sufficient for them if they reaches puberty during their fasting?

A. When young boys and girls reach the age of seven, they are to be ordered to fast so that they become accustomed to it. Their guardians should order them to do so, just as they order them to perform prayer. Then, when they reach puberty, fasting becomes incumbent upon them. And if

they reach puberty during a day in which they are observing the fast, their fasting in that day suffices for them. Hence, if the fasting child turns fifteen years old by noon, then that day (of fasting) is sufficient for him. The first part of the day would be classified as supererogatory while the latter half would be obligatory, so long as he had not yet reached puberty, either by the development of pubic hair or ejaculation of sexual fluids due to (sexual) desire. This is also the case with the girl, as the ruling for both is equal [in this matter], except that there is an additional sign indicating her having reached puberty, that is her menses.

Q. A female questioner from `Afif asks: I have a twelve year old son. Is fasting optional or non-obligatory for him, or should I compel him to fast, knowing that he may not be able to fast the whole month? May Allah best reward you.

A. If your son has not yet reached puberty, he is not obliged to fast. However, you must command him to fast, if he can endure it without hardship, so that he would become accustomed to it. He should also be commanded to perform prayer and should be (lightly) beaten for neglecting it by the age of ten. May Allah grant us all success.

43. The ruling on the fast of women during menstruation or postpartum period

Q. What is the ruling on women's fast during menstruation or postpartum bleeding? What are they required to do if they delay making up missed fast days until another Ramadan?

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A. Women during menstruation or postpartum bleeding must not fast, as they are not permitted to pray or fast at all during these times, and if they perform them, they will not be acceptable. Besides, they have to make up the missed fast days, but not the missed prayers, as it was authentically reported from `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that she was asked, "Should the menstruating woman make up the missed fast days and prayers?" and that she (may Allah be pleased with her) answered, ﴾We were ordered to make up for fasting, but not to make up for prayers.﴿ (Agreed upon)

Besides, Muslim scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them) agreed upon what `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) mentioned regarding the obligation of making up the missed fast days and not making up the missed prayers for women during menstruation or postpartum bleeding. Indeed, this is a mercy and facilitation from Allah for women, as prayer is repeated five times a day and, thus, there is a difficulty in making them up. As for fasting, it is obligatory only once a year, i.e. during Ramadan; hence, there is no hardship in making up missed days of fasting. Whoever delays making up missed days of fasting until another Ramadan without a valid legal excuse should repent to Allah, make up the missed days, and feed one poor person for each day. Likewise, if a person who was sick or a traveling delays making up the missed days of fasting until another Ramadan without a valid legal excuse, he must repent to Allah, make up the missed days and feed one poor person for each day. But, if his disease or travel continued until another Ramadan approached, he should make up the missed days of fasting without offering the expiation of feeding [one poor person for each day] after recovering from the disease or returning home.

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Q. A sister from the city of Wahran in Algeria writes: Your Eminence Sheikh Ibn Baz, I hope that you kindly enlighten me on authentic opinions regarding women's fasting and prayer during menstruation, may Allah reward you.

A. A menstruating woman should not offer prayer or fasting. Then, when she becomes clean [from bleeding], she should make up the missed days of fasting, but not the missed prayers. It was reported by Al-Bukhari and others regarding the Prophet's (peace be upon him) illustration of his statement that women have a deficiency in their Deen (Faith), that he (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during menstruation?﴿ Also, Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated from Mu`adhah that she asked `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), ﴾"Why must we make up the fasting days, and not the prayers, missed during our menstruation?" `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) asked her, "Are you from Harura' [a town in Iraq]?" Mu`adhah answered, "I am not from Harura', but I simply ask." `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "We experienced menstruation while we were with the Prophet (peace be upon him), and we were then ordered to make up the missed days of fasting, but we were not ordered to make up the prayers."﴿ . (Related by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others) Indeed, this is a mercy for Allah

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(Glorified be He) and a means of facilitation for women. Since prayer is repeated five times a day and menstruation is mostly repeated every month, there would be a great difficulty in making up the missed prayers. As for fasting, it is obligatory only once a year, i.e. during Ramadan. Thus, there is no hardship for the menstruating woman to make up the missed days of fasting in fulfillment of legal interest. May Allah Grant us success.

44. A menstruating woman should make up the missed fast days

Q. I have a sister who for several years has not made up missed fast days due to her period. She was unaware of the ruling, especially because some common people told her that she did not have to make up the missed days of fasting. What should she do?

A. She has to ask Allah for forgiveness and repent to Him. Besides, she must make up

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the days she missed and must feed one poor person for each day. For, this was issued as Fatwa by a number of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Here, feeding involves giving out half a Sa`, which is equivalent to one and a half kilograms (of foodstuff). However, what some ignorant women told her about not having to fast does not waive this obligation. `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, (We were ordered [by Allah's Prophet] to make up fasting, but not to make up prayers.) (Agreed upon)

If another Ramadan comes before she makes up the missed days of fasting, then she is sinful and she has to make up the missed days, repent, and feed one poor person for each day if she has the ability to do so. If she is poor and cannot feed others, then fasting and repentance are sufficient, and she does not have to feed others. If she cannot remember how many days she has to fast, she should proceed on the basis of what she thinks is most likely and should fast the days that she thinks she missed during Ramadan, and that will be sufficient. Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) states, (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can) It is out of Allah's mercy and facilitation for women that He does not oblige them to make up missed prayers, due to the difficulty involved in making them up.

Those who are ill should observe prayers according to their capacities, even if they are wearing unclean clothes - in case they fail to wash them or to find clean clothes. Moreover, they can perform Tayammum (dry ablution) if they cannot make Wudu' (ablution with water), as Allah (Exalted be He) states, (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can) They can even face any direction other than the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah), if

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they are unable to face it. Besides, sick persons can pray according to their own capacity, i.e. while standing, sitting, lying on their sides or laying on their backs. For, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Imran ibn Husayn, who was ill, (Pray while standing, and if you cannot, pray while sitting and if you cannot, then pray lying on your side, and if you cannot even do that, then pray laying on your back.) (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih and Al-Nasa'i in his Sunan, knowing that the wording quoted here is from Al-Nasa'i) However, if one is mentally ill, they need not make up the missed prayers, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, (There are three (persons) whose actions are not recorded: A sleeper till he awakes, a lunatic till he recovers his mind and a boy till he reaches puberty.) However, those who lose their mind for two or three days due to an illness and then

recover should make up the missed prayers, just as the one who wakes from sleep. May Allah grant us success!

Q. I had my first period when I was 14, and I felt too shy to tell my mother. I did not make up

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the missed fast days of Ramadan, knowing that this was 11 years ago. My period was not regular; sometimes it would be three or four months between my periods. I do not remember whether I had my period during the previous months of Ramadan before my marriage or not. What is the ruling on this matter?

A. You should make up the missed days that you did not fast since you reached puberty. Also, you should repent to Allah and feed one poor person for each day, by giving half of a Sa`, which is equivalent to one and a half kilograms. This is because once a girl has her first period, she is obliged to pray and fast [after the end of her period], even if she is under 15.

Q. A woman, then not knowing the ruling, did not make up the missed days of fasting due to her period for about 10 years. She was unaware and only recently learned that ruling, though she is now old. What should she do?

A. She has to make up the missed days with the intention to fast the missed days of each year respectively. Besides, she has to feed one poor person for each day, by giving half of a Sa` of staple food in her country, if she is able to do so. If she is poor and cannot feed others, then fasting is sufficient.

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Moreover, if she is old and cannot endure fasting, feeding [a poor person for each day] will be sufficient. May Allah Grant us success!

Q: I had my first period when I was twelve, and this was before Ramadan. My family did not encourage me to fast, arguing that I was under my fourteen. They were ignorant of the ruling and not negligent of Allah's Commands. Please guide me to what I should do now?

A: You should make up the missed days that you did not fast since you reached puberty. Also, you should repent to Allah and feed one needy person for each day, by giving half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of dates, rice or whatever the staple food is in one's country. Many of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) held this opinion. The amount of a half Sa` equals about one and a half kilogram. All food, which is offered as expiation, can be given to one needy person before or after fasting the missed days, if you are able to do so. If you are poor and cannot feed others then your Sawm (Fast) will be sufficient. May Allah grant us success!

Q: When I was twenty six years old, my mother told me: "I did not tell you that you had to fast [when you reached puberty] because you were young and the weather was too hot. Also, I did not tell you when you got married because you suffered from a disease and then you were stricken by heart disease.

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Now, I tell you that you did not fast a full month and you have to make up for it." I am a mother of two daughters, and my mother preferred to tell me that until Allah granted me recovery. Should I make up for the whole month I missed? Please benefit me. May Allah reward you well!

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) To proceed: You have to make up the missed days that you did not fast since you had your first period, if you had your first period before the age of fifteen. If you had your first period after the age of fifteen, you have to make up the missed days that you did not fast since you reached the age of fifteen. Also, you have to feed one needy person for each missed day by giving half a Sa` of dates, wheat, rice, or whatever is the staple food of your country. In addition, you must repent to Allah and ask His Forgiveness. May Allah grant success to all! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

45- Ruling on the menstruating woman who fasted while ignorant of the ruling

Q: A woman says that she had her menses for the first time in Ramadan when she was thirteen years old. Owing to her ignorance of the ruling, she used to perform Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast). Yet, she did not make up for the day during which she was menstruating.

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It is worth mentioning that was unaware that Sawm (Fast) during menstruation is Haram (prohibited) and the obligation of making up for the missed day after Ramadan is over. This had been the case with her for many years. So, will she make up for these days now? Please benefit us. May Allah reward you!

A: Firstly, it is impermissible for the menstruating woman to perform Salah (Prayer) or Sawm (Fast) during the period of menstruation. She was wrong when she did so. Therefore, she has to offer Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and ask Him for Forgiveness, for she cannot not be excused for ignorance of the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) ruling on such issues. It was incumbent upon her to inquire about the sound ruling on such a case.

Secondly, it is obligatory upon her to make up for the number of days of Ramadan that she missed, whether it is for one month of Ramadan or more. However, her she will not receive any reward for her Sawm (Fast) during the period of menstruation. In addition, she must feed one needy person half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple food of the country for each day she missed.

Ruling on the Sawm of a menstruating woman if she becomes pure before dawn

Q: If a menstruating woman becomes Tahir (pure, i.e., her menses ended) and performs Ghusl (ritual bath) before dawn, what is the ruling on her Sawm (Fasting)?

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A: Her Sawm is valid if she is certain that she is Tahir before the break of dawn; it is important that she is certain about it, because some women think that their menses has ended when it has not. This is why women used to bring the cotton pads to 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) to ask whether the sign of purity was there, but she used to say to them, "Do not be hasty until you see the white discharge."

A woman must be patient until she is certain that the menses has ended. When she does become Tahir, she should make the intention to observe Sawm, even if she does not perform Ghusl (ritual bath) until after the break of dawn. But she must also be mindful of Salah (Prayer), and so hasten to take Ghusl to perform the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on time. We have been told that some women become Tahir after or before the break of dawn, but they delay their Ghusl until after sunrise, on the pretext that they want to perform a more perfect, cleaner, and purer Ghusl. This is wrong, whether in Ramadan or at any other time; it is obligatory on them to hurry to perform Ghusl so they can offer Salah on time. They may just perform the obligatory parts of Ghusl to make sure that they can perform Salah, and if they would like to become cleaner and purer, there is no harm in performing Ghusl again after sunrise. The same applies to a woman who is Junub (in a state of major ritual impurity) who has not performed Ghusl (ritual bath following major ritual impurity) until after the break of dawn. Her Sawm is also valid and there is no sin on her. The same also applies to a man who is Junub; if he performs Ghusl from it after the break of dawn when he is observing Sawm, there is no sin on him. It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that if dawn time arrived while he (peace be upon him) was Junub after having conjugal intercourse he used to get up and perform Ghusl after the break of dawn. And Allah knows best!

47. Ruling on the Sawm of a woman who starts to menstruate after sunset

Q: If a woman starts to menstruate a little after sunset, what is the ruling on her Sawm (Fasting)?

A: Her Sawm is valid, even if she feels the menstrual symptoms, such as pain and cramps, before sunset but she does not see any bleeding until after sunset. What invalidates Sawm is the emission of menstrual blood, not feeling it.

Q: Is it obligatory to make up for Sawm (Fasting) if a women starts her monthly period after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer or before performing the Salah (Prayer) after iftar (breaking the Fast)?

A: She does not have to make up for the day if she has completed the day's Sawm and then starts to menstruate after sunset, even if it is before performing the Salah; nothing is required of her. The same applies, with all the more reason, in case it starts after performing Salah. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family!

48. Whether a menstruating woman who becomes Tahir during the day, should abstain from all that invalidates Sawm

Q: What is the ruling on a menstruating woman who becomes Tahir (pure, i.e., her menses ended) during the day in Ramadan?

A: She should abstain from all that invalidates Sawm (Fasting), according to the more correct of the two opinions held by scholars, as her lawful excuse has ended, and she has to make up for that day. Likewise, if Ramadan new-moon sighting is confirmed during daytime, the Muslims should abstain from all that invalidates Sawm for the rest of the day and make up for it, according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars). The same applies to a traveler; if they arrive in their city during daytime in Ramadan, they should abstain for the rest of the day, as they are not traveling any more and so no longer come under the ruling on traveling, and they should make up for that day, according the more correct of the two opinions held by scholars. May Allah grant us success!

49. Ruling on pre-menstrual discharge

Q: The questioner asks another question: Five days before my monthly period starts, I have a brown discharge, and then my natural bleeding starts and continues for eight days, after these first five days.

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I perform Salah (Prayer) during those five days, but I want to ask: Is it obligatory on me to perform Salah and Sawm (Fasting) during those days or not? Please advise me and may Allah help you.

A: If those five days of experiencing brown discharge are separate from the bleeding, they are not considered as part of the menstruation, so you should perform Salah and Sawm, and perform Wudu' (ablution) for each Salah. The reason for this is because it carries the same ruling as urine, not menstrual blood, and this does not prevent you from performing Salah or Sawm. It does, however, necessitate the performance of Wudu' for every Salah until that discharge stops, just as in the case of Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period). However, if those five days are connected to the menstruation, they are considered part of it, and you cannot perform Salah or Sawm during them.

If this Kudrah (dusky-colored vaginal discharge during or after menstruation) or Sufrah (yellow vaginal discharge during or after menstruation) comes out after purity from menstruation, it is not considered as part of the menstruation, but it takes the same ruling as Istihadah. You should perform Istinja' (cleansing the private parts with water after urination or defecation) from it at the time of each Salah, perform Wudu', and then perform Salah, and you should observe Sawm. As this is not considered menstruation, your husband may have sexual intercourse with you, because Um 'Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, ("We used not to regard Kudrah and Sufrah after purity as anything that mattered.") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]" and Abu Dawud; that is the wording of Abu Dawud) Um 'Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) was

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one of the honorable female Sahabah (contemporaries of the Prophet), who narrated many Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

50. Ruling on the fasting of the woman who is in a state of Istihadah

Q: Is it lawful for the woman who is in a state of Istihadah to have intercourse with her husband?

A: Istihadah means suffering from abnormal vaginal bleeding outside of menstrual or postpartum bleeding. The woman who is in a state of Istihadah takes the same ruling of the Tahir (ritually pure) woman, i.e. she can pray, fast, and have intercourse with her husband. However, she should make Wudu' (ablution) before every Salah (Prayer) like those who suffer from continuous minor ritual impurity, such as urine and breaking wind. Moreover, she should place pads or anything else [at the place of bleeding] to protect her body and clothes. There are many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the same effect.

51. Ruling on the Fast of the woman who becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period

Q: Is it permissible for the woman who becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period to observe Sawm (Fast), Salah (Prayer) and Hajj (Pilgrimage)?

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A: The woman who becomes ritually clean before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period is permitted to observe Sawm (Fast), Salah (Prayer), Hajj (Pilgrimage), `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) and have intercourse with her husband. For example, if she becomes ritually clean after twenty days, she should take a ceremonial bath. Thereafter, she is allowed to observe Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast), and have intercourse with her husband. As for what was narrated that `Uthman ibn Abu Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with him) considered this as Makruh (reprehensible). Yet, it is classified as Makruh Tanzihi (reprehensible yet lawful). However, the view of `Uthman (may Allah be merciful and pleased with him) is based upon his Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) but has no evidence to support it.

The preponderant opinion is that: There is no harm in this act. If she becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period, then her purity will be valid. If her bleeding resumes during the forty days after a period of ritual purity, then she can consider it a postpartum period. However, her Sawm (Fast), Salah (Prayer) and Hajj (Pilgrimage) that she performed during the period of purity are valid and should not be repeated, as long as they were performed during a state of ritual purity.

Q: Many people think that if a woman gives birth, she must refrain for forty days from observing Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast) even if she becomes ritually pure. What is the ruling on this?

A: The observance of Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast), and engagement in sexual intercourse are prohibited during the postpartum period in the same way as during the period of menstruation. Childbirth bleeding is the blood discharged after delivery. Therefore,

if a woman experiences blood discharge within forty days after delivery, she should refrain from observing Salah (Prayer) Sawm (Fast) and having sexual intercourse with her husband until she becomes ritually pure or completes the forty days period. Thereafter, if her bleeding resumes until the forty days are completed, then she should make Ghusl (ritual bath) at when the forty day are completed. This is because the postpartum period does not exceed forty days according to the soundest opinion. Thus, she makes Ghusl (ritual bath), observes Salah (Prayer) becomes lawful for her husband to have sexual intercourse with her. Moreover, she should guard against leakage using a pad and the like to protect her clothes and body. The blood discharged after that takes the same ruling of Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period), during which a woman can observe Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast) and engage in sexual intercourse with her husband. However, she has to perform Wudu' for every Salah. If she becomes ritually pure before the end of forty days, she should make Ghusl (ritual bath), observe Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast). It also becomes lawful for her to have sexual intercourse with her husband as long as she is ritually pure, regardless of the duration of her postpartum period. However, if the blood discharge returns during the forty days, she must refrain from observing Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast) and engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband until she becomes ritually pure once again or completes the forty day period. However, her Sawm (Fast) and Salah (Prayer) that she performed during the period of purity are valid. In addition, she is not obligated to repeat Sawm (Fast) once again.

Q: A woman became ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period. She took the ritual bath and fasted the remaining days of Ramadan. Then she was told that: "You should repeat the days you fasted before the end of the forty days." What is the ruling on this matter? Should she repeat the days that she fasted? Is it permissible for a woman who becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period to have intercourse with her husband? Is it permissible for the woman who becomes ritually pure before the end of the seven days

of menstruation to have intercourse with her husband?

A: If the case is as you mentioned, then if she becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period and fasts some days during the state of ritual purity, her Sawm (Fast) is valid and should not be repeated. It is permissible for a woman who becomes ritually pure before the end of the forty days of the postpartum bleeding period, or before the end of the seven days of menstruation, to have intercourse with her husband after taking the ritual bath.

The ruling on Sawm observed during the postpartum period when blood reappears after Taharah

Q: If a woman in her postpartum period becomes ritually pure after a week (of delivery), then fasts in Ramadan for several days after which the blood discharge reappears, should she break her Sawm (Fast) in this case? Is she obligated to make up for the days she fasted and the days she did not?

A: If a woman in her postpartum period becomes ritually pure within forty days and observes Sawm (fast) for several days, then she experiences a discharge of blood again, then her (previous) Sawm (Fast) is valid. Yet, she must refrain from observing Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast) during the days in which she experiences the discharge of blood, for it is considered postpartum bleeding. This should continue until she becomes ritually pure or completes the forty days period. Upon finishing them, she should perform

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Ghusl (ritual bath) even if the blood discharge has not stopped, because the maximum limit for the postpartum period is forty days according to the most authentic of the two scholarly opinions. Thus, she must perform Wudu' (ablution) for every Salah (Prayer) until the discharge of blood stops. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the woman who experienced Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period) to do. Moreover, it is permissible for her husband to have sexual intercourse with her after the passage of forty days regardless of the blood discharge, for it is excretory blood that does not affect Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast) or prevents the husband from having sexual intercourse with his wife. On the other hand, if the blood discharge appearing after forty days coincides with her menstruation, she should abandon Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast) and consider it as menstruation. May Allah grant us success!

Q: If a woman becomes ritually pure within the forty days period, should she observe Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast)? If she has her menstruation afterwards, should she break her Fast? What if she becomes ritually pure again, should she observe Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast)?

A: If a woman becomes ritually pure before completing the forty days period, she should perform Ghusl (ritual bath), observe Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast), and it becomes lawful for her husband to have sexual intercourse with her. However, if the blood discharge reappears, she should refrain from observing Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast), and it is becomes unlawful for her husband to engage in sexual intercourse with her, according to the most authentic view of the two scholarly opinions. In this case, she takes the ruling of a woman in the postpartum period until she becomes ritually pure or completes the forty days period. If she becomes ritually pure again before or on the fortieth day, she must perform Ghusl (ritual bath). Then it will be permissible for her to observe Sawm (Fast), and for her husband to her husband to have sexual intercourse with her. But, if the blood discharge continues after the forty days period, then it is considered excretory blood where she

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should not abandon Salah (Prayer) or Sawm (Fast) on account of it. It also becomes lawful for her husband to have sexual intercourse with her in the same way as the woman who experiences Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual). More importantly, she must perform Istinja' (cleansing the private parts with water after urination or defecation) and guard against blood discharge using a cotton pad, or the like. She must also perform Wudu' (ablution) for every Salah, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the woman who experienced Istihadah to do so. However, if she notices her menstruation, she must refrain from observing Salah.

53. Ruling on women's taking of pills that stop the menstrual and postpartum bleeding

Q: What is the ruling on taking pills to stop menstrual or postpartum bleeding?

A: If a woman uses pills or injections to stop menstrual or postpartum bleeding and takes a ritual bath [after the bleeding stops], she is permitted to perform all the [ritual] practices of women who are in a state of ritual purity. Hence, her Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fast) will be valid.

Q: Some women use pills to inhibit menstruation during Ramadan in order to complete the entire month of fasting without missing any days. Is this

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permissible?

A: It is permissible for them to do so, provided that it does not pose any harm to them. This is because they stand to gain a great benefit; i.e., fasting the whole month and avoiding having to make up the missed days of Sawm (Fast) later.

Q: Is it permissible for women to use contraceptive pills to delay menstruation during Ramadan?

A: There is no harm in doing so. This is because they will have a great benefit; i.e., fasting the whole month and avoiding having to make up the missed days of fasting later. However, they should make sure that such pills do not harm them; as some women may suffer [side effects] from taking them.

54. Ruling on the elderly men and women who cannot fast

Q: An old man of seventy five cannot fast due to an ulcer of the stomach. What is the ruling regarding his case?

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A: Elderly people who cannot fast are permitted to break their Sawm (Fast). However, they must feed one needy person for each day; by inviting him or her to share food with them or by giving half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of dates, wheat, rice, or whatever is the staple food of the country. But, if they suffer from any disease such as ulcer of the stomach, they are excused from Sawm (Fast), without offering the expiation of feeding [one needy person for each day]. This is because they break their Sawm (Fast) due to illness and not old age. If Allah grants them recovery, they must make up the missed days of Sawm (Fast). If they cannot make up the missed days [after recovery] because of old age, they should feed one needy person for each day, as explained above. This is the opinion of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and many other scholars. There are many evidence, such as Allah's Saying: ﴿but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴾ Hence, elderly people who cannot make up missed days should offer the expiation of feeding [one needy person for each day]. When Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) - who was the servant of the Prophet (peace be upon him) - reached old age and became unable to fast, he discontinued Sawm (Fast) and fed one needy person for each day. May Allah grant us success!

Q: My friend's father is an old man who observes Salah (Prayer) continually. But six years ago he gave up Sawm (Fast) and continued to perform Prayers only, due to chronic heart disease. Is it permissible for his daughters to fast on his behalf?

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A: As long as he remains unable to fast due to an incurable disease - confirmed by a trustworthy Muslim doctor, he should feed one needy person for each day, just as the elderly person who is unable to fast. He should offer half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of dates, rice or whatever is the staple food of the country. It is not permissible to perform Sawm (Fast) on behalf of those who are not expected to recover owing to incurable diseases, as long as they are still alive. But, if death occurs while having to complete some days of Sawm (Fast), the heirs have the choice to fast on their behalf or not. If they fast, they will be among the well-doers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever dies while needing to complete some days of fasting, his heir can fast on his behalf.﴿ However, if they only offer the expiation of feeding [one needy person for each day], then this will be sufficient for them.

Q: There is an elderly lady who is unable to fast. What should she do?

A: She must feed one poor person for each day, giving half a Sa` of dates, rice, or whatever is the staple food of the country. Half a Sa` is approximately equivalent to one and a half kilograms. This was the opinion of a number of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) including Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). If she is poor and cannot feed others then she need not do anything.

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It is permissible to give this expiation to one person or more at the beginning, middle, or end of the month. May Allah grant us success!

55. Whoever cannot fast should offer feed as an expiation

Q: I am an old man of seventy years. I broke my fasting for 26 days during Ramadan many years ago due to an illness that affects me from time to time. My question is: Should I make up for these days and offer the expiation of feeding in spite of my old age? Or should I offer the expiation of feeding only without making up for the missed days? What is the size of Sa` in kilograms?

A: If you want to adopt the safest course of action, you should make up for the missed days, as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ However, if you delayed making up for the missed days on purpose while you have had ample time to make them up, you must make them up, feed a poor person for each day and repent to Allah.

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You must give half a Sa` [of dates or whatever is the staple food of the country] for each day of fasting that you missed without a legal excuse. Half a Sa` is approximately equivalent to one and a half kilograms. All food, which is offered as expiation, can be given to one poor person. If you fail to make up for the missed days due to old age or an incurable illness - as confirmed by a trustworthy Muslim doctor, you are permitted not to make up for the missed days of fasting. However, you must feed one poor person for each day, giving half a Sa` of dates, rice, or other staple food of the country. May Allah guide us all to what He loves and accepts!

Q: Should those who are permitted to break their fasting such as the elderly and the sick that are not expected to recover, offer the expiation of feeding?

A: Those who are unable to fast due to old age or an incurable disease should feed one poor person for each day, if they are able to do so. This was the opinion of a number of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) including Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).

56- Islamic obligations are suspended in cases of mental disorder

This is a message from `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother Mr. R. A. F., may Allah guide him to every goodness!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I would like to inform you that I have received your letter dated 4/9/1393 A.H. May Allah grant you guidance! Your letter states that your mother suffered from some mental illness and did not fast during Ramadan for seven years and the expiation for these months was not paid. After that, she was recovered and became able to make up for the missed months. You want to know whether it is permissible for you to fast these months on her behalf or must she fast herself; although this involves some risk to her due to the disease she has which affects the nerves, or to pay the expiation for not fasting during these months. I understood your question well.

A: If your mother gave up fasting due to mental disorder, she is not required to make up for the missed days of fasting. This is because the Islamic duties are removed during

this period. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, (The Pen is lifted (is stopped from recording the deeds) of three... and he (peace be upon him) mentioned among them those who are insane until they recover.) If a person is mentally impaired due to any kind of illness, s/he takes the ruling of one who is insane and is not accountable. As for your mother, if she abandoned fasting owing to some illness while she was of sound mind, she should make up for the missed days after recovery according to her capacity even on discontinuous days. If she dies while she is ill, no one is required to make up for what she missed and it is not permissible for anyone to fast on her behalf while she is living. May Allah help us all understand His religion well and remain firm on it! May Allah reward you well for caring for your mother! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

President of the Islamic University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

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Q: I have an elderly grandmother who was not able to fast for ten years and then died this year. Neither did she nor her heirs offer Kaffarah (expiation) for past years because they do not know the ruling on this matter. It is noteworthy that she was receiving assistance from the Social Insurance Authority. Are her heirs sinful and obliged to offer Kaffarah for the missed days of fasting during the past months of Ramadan? Please advise, may Allah reward you!

A: If she was sane during that time and able to offer Kaffarah, her heirs should offer it from her inheritance for the missed days that she did not offer Kaffarah. They must feed one needy person half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple food of the country for each day she missed.

If her mental state was a result of old age or the payments given by Social Insurance Authority were so little that she could not offer Kaffarah, there is no harm on her or on her heirs. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾What I have forbidden you to do,

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avoid it and what I have ordered you [to do], do as much of it as you can.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Moreover, the obligation of offering Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (fasting) is waived owing to old age if this was the case. May Allah grant us success!

Q: My father is a very old man and has lost his memory. He could not fast Ramadan, so I paid fifteen Riyals per day on his behalf as Kaffarah (expiation), is this permissible?

A: If your father lost his memory, there is no blame on him and he is not required to pay Kaffarah, charity, or any thing else. However, if he is sane but cannot endure fasting, you must feed the poor on his behalf and you should not pay the Kaffarah in form of money. The kaffarah is to pay half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) for each day i.e. 15 Sa` in total.

57 - The ruling on the fasting of a person who loses consciousness

Q: An ill person fasted some days of Ramadan. He then fell into a comma and remained unconscious; should his children make up for the days missed on his behalf if he dies? May Allah bless you!

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A: In the name of Allah. Praise be to Allah. He is not required to compensate for the days he missed during his insanity or comma. If he regains consciousness, there is no compensation for him. He takes the same ruling applied to a person who is insane and does not make up for the days missed. However, if the comma lasted for a short time such as one, two, or three days at most, there is no harm in making up for these days which is safer. In cases where the period is long, he takes the rule of an insane and he is not required to make up for these days. When he regains his mind, he should begin fasting. His children are not required to compensate up for him if he dies. We ask Allah to grant us a safe and healthy life.

Q: Mr. Abu Qasim from Riyadh asks, "A man loses consciousness for a few hours. Is he required to fast in Ramadan?

A: If this happens to him for a few hours, he is asked to fast just like a person sleeping for some hours. Moreover, losing consciousness from time to time during day or night does not nullify the obligation of fasting. May Allah grant him recovery and cure!

58- The sick may break Sawm if it is hard for them

Q: I am a 16-year old sick person. For five years and until now, I have been receiving treatment from King Faysal Specialized Hospital.

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While I was fasting during the past Ramadan, my doctor instructed to give me a dose of chemotherapy into the vein. The medication was very strong and affected my stomach and whole body. On the same day, I was so hungry from the very beginning of the day and during the entire day, but I did not break my fast. During Ramadan this year, the doctor will instruct the same medication. May I break my fast for this day? If I can, must I make up for it? Does taking blood from the veins and taking the said medication break the fast? Please advise, may Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is prescribed for sick people not to fast in Ramadan if fasting will cause harm, or make the sickness worse, or if they need treatment during the day in the form of medicine or pills that must be swallowed, because Allah says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah loves

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people to avail themselves of His Rukhsah (concession) just as He hates them to commit sin.﴿ According to another narration, ﴾As He loves His commands to be obeyed.﴿ With regards to taking blood from veins for testing or the like, the correct view is that this does not break the fast. However, if it is done often, it is better to leave it until night-time. If it is done during the day, so be on the safe side and make up for that day, because this is akin to cupping.

Q: I suffered from a severe illness which obliged me to travel to a non-Muslim country to receive treatment. The month of Ramadan came while I was in a foreign country and my Christian doctor ordered me to break my fast under the claim that the drugs may be harmful to me if I did not eat food and, especially, water. So I had to do so. The doctor ordered me to stay on medication for a long time. When I returned, I consulted a Muslim doctor who required me to break my fast this year as well. In fact, I have tried to fast but I found a decline in my health in consequence. What should I do? Should I feed people instead of

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fasting, taking into consideration that I am of a low-income employee? Please, advise!

A: Dear brother, there is no blame on you with respect to giving up fasting, because you are ill and observing fasting causes harm to you and physicians commanded you to do so. You are allowed to break your fast if you have to take medicines at fixed times of the day. Allah (glory be to Him) said: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿

If you feel some illness, which makes fasting difficult for you, it is permissible for you to break your fast even without consulting a doctor. This is because illness is mentioned in the text from the Noble Qur'an which means that it is a legal excuse like traveling. You should make up for the missed days when you recover even if it takes a long time. Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) said: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ It means that a person should make up for what he/she missed of days. Therefore, my brother in Islam, when you are healed and restore your good health you should make up for the missed days. We hope that you will be better soon. All praise is due to Allah. May Allah cure you and grant you remedy!

59- The patient should make up for the days missed of fasting after recovery

Q: Sister `A. Z. from Al-Ta'if , Saudi Arabia says: I used to suffer from an abdominal disease so I could not fast Ramadan; what should I do?

A: If a Muslim suffers from any disease and can not fast, it is permissible for them to break their fast. They should make up for the days which they missed after they recover. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴿ May Allah grant us success!

Q: Name: `A.N.`A. Age: 58 years. Nationality: Saudi Arabian.The mentioned person visited clinics, celoscopy units, psychology clinics, and urinary tract clinics in Shaqra' Public Hospital and Riyadh Medical Complex, Riyadh. He

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suffers from a drop in the upper opening of the stomach, and chronic inflammation in stomach membrane according to the stomachoscopy, the chronic oppilation, frequent abdomen pain and high blood pressure. According to the lab tests received from Riyadh Medical Complex, Shaqra' and Dallah hospital in Riyadh, the patient is a carrier of C hepatitis blood virus in addition to the mentioned hospitals, he visited King Faysal Specialized Hospital and the Researches Center in Riyadh. He also suffers from prostate chronic inflammation and he has some tests done and is taking medication until now. He spent many years suffering from anxiety and psychological depression and he is still under psychotherapy until now. He is still under supervision and treatment in King Faysal Specialized hospital, Researches Center, Riyadh Medical Complex, Dallah hospital in Riyadh, Shaqra' Public Hospital in abdomen clinics and celoscopy unit, psychology clinic and urinary tract until now.

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Dear General Director of Shaqra' Public hospital, may Allah protect you.

I salute you with the salutation of Islam. To proceed: I seek your permission to submit the subject to his Eminence Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz in person. I would like to draw your attention that Ramadan is about to come and I suffer from the mentioned diseases. I can not stand thirst, therefore I carry a bottle of water with me all the time even if I go somewhere that is close. I do not eat but little and I feel tired when my stomach is empty which feels emptiness in less than an hour. I also get tired when I eat or talk and may go to the hospital. It is worth mentioning that doctors advise me not to eat proteins, fats, acids and flavors. They only allow me to eat little food with little nutrition. I fear Allah. Some doctors advised me to break my Sawm (Fasting) during Ramadan and to feed a needy person everyday but I will only accept the Fatwa of Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz ibn Baz. Could you kindly advise me about the religious ruling? May Allah save you!

A: In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. Praise be to Allah. According to the report mentioned above about the conditions of the mentioned person, he may break Sawm in Ramadan as long as Sawm is hard

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and he has to make up for the missed days when Allah cures him because of Allah's saying: (So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same

number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) May Allah cure him from all diseases and guide everyone to things which please Him.

Fatwa issued by `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, the General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars. May Allah send peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his Companions!

Q: I am a sick woman. Last Ramadan, I did not fast some days and could not make up for these days due to my illness. What is the Kaffarah (expiation) of breaking my fast? It is worth mentioning that I cannot fast Ramadan this year either, so what is the Kaffarah?

A: It is permissible for a patient who finds it hard to observe Sawm (Fast) to break their fast. They should make up for the days which they missed when they recover. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ Dear questioner, you are not to be blamed if you do not fast Ramadan as long as you are still ill. Allah granted Rukhsah (concession) to those who are ill and those who are on a journey to break their fast. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Allah (may He be Glorified) likes His servants to undertake the legal concessions given to them in the same way He hates them to disobey him."﴿

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You do not have to pay Kaffarah. However, you should make up for the broken fast when you recover. May Allah cure you from every disease and forgive us all sins!

60- Difference between curable and incurable disease

Q: I suffer from a nervous system disease for which I take a medication three times a day. The mental hospital instructed me to take this medication permanently. If I stop this medication, my illness gets worse and I may become unconscious. I want to fast but I fear from the effects of not taking the medication.

A: You should not observe Sawm (fast) as Allah (Exalted be He) says: (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) Since the reality is as you have mentioned, you should take the medication daily and should not observe Sawm until Allah cures you. You can refer to the specialized doctors

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if they, according to their experience, decide that this illness is incurable, you take the same ruling as an old man or woman. You have to feed one needy person half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of dates or rice for each missed day in the beginning, middle or end of Ramadan. This would suffice in sha'-Allah (if Allah wills). If the doctors decide that this illness is curable after two or three years have passed, you should make up for the missed fasts later when Allah cures you.

Q: I suffer from a gastric ulcer and diabetes. What should I do if I can not observe Sawm (fast)?

A: You should consult the specialized doctors if they, according to their experience, decide that Sawm harms your health, you should break your fast. You should make up for the missed fasts later when Allah cures you.

If the doctors decide that this illness is incurable and ever-lasting and that Sawm makes it worse, you should not observe Sawm. You have to feed one needy person half a Sa` (approximately one and half Kg) of the staple food of the country for each missed day. You are not obliged to fast as Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother..., I received your letter about your wife, who has been ill for many years and was, therefore, unable to observe Sawm (Fast) in Ramadan 1391 A.H. She is also unable to observe Sawm in Ramadan this year, so you would like a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) on this matter.

A: As long as it is difficult for her to observe Sawm, it is permissible for her not to fast. If she recovers, she has to make up for the missed days, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fast) must be made up] from other days.﴿ But if the doctors decide that her illness is incurable, she should feed a needy person half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 3 kg. approx.) of the staple food of her country for each day she missed, and she does not need to make up for these days. We ask Allah to restore her health and well-being and make her illness a purification for her and an expiation for her sins. Indeed, He is the Best One to be asked. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

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From 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to his honorable brother..., may Allah guide him to all the good! Amen!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your letter, and may you receive Allah's Guidance! You mentioned in your letter that, as you are elderly and suffer from hemiplegia, you are unable to observe Sawm (Fasting), because if you do observe it, your condition worsens. You would like a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) on this matter.

A: If the medical specialists say that your illness is one that is incurable, it is obligatory on you to feed a poor person for every day that you do not perform Sawm in Ramadan, and no Sawm is required of you. The amount you should give is half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) of the staple food of your country, such as dates, rice, or other than that. If you provide the poor person with lunch or dinner, that will suffice. If the doctors decide that your illness is curable, you do not have to feed the poor, but it is obligatory on you to make up for the missed Sawm when Allah cures your illness, as Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ I ask Allah to grant you a recovery from all that is bad, make your affliction be a purification for you and an expiation for your sins, and grant you patience and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Recompense), for He is the Best One to be asked! As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

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Q: A man writes: i suffer from epilepsy and could not perform Sawm (Fasting) in the blessed month of Ramadan, because I have to take medication three times a day. I tried to perform it for two days, but I was not able to do it. I am retired and receive a pension of 83 dinars a month. I am married, and I do not have any income other than my pension. What is the legal ruling on my situation, if I cannot feed thirty poor people in Ramadan? How much should I pay?"

A: If the illness that you are suffering from is curable one day, you should wait until you recover from it and then perform Sawm, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿

However, if your illness is chronic and incurable, it is obligatory on you to feed a poor person for every day of Sawm that you missed. It is also permissible for you to prepare lunch or dinner and invite some poor people similar in number to the days of the month to be fasted and thereby discharge the obligation on you. I do not think that anybody is unable to do that, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). There is no blame on you if you cannot afford to feed these poor people in one month, so

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there is nothing wrong with you feeding some of the poor people in one month, some others in another month, and some others in another month, according to your ability. And Allah knows best!

61. Permission for pregnant or breastfeeding women not to observe Sawm if it is difficult for them and to make up for it later

Q: If a pregnant woman cannot observe Sawm (Fasting), what should she do?

A: The ruling on a pregnant woman who finds it difficult to observe Sawm is the same ruling as for someone who is ill. The same ruling also applies to a breastfeeding mother who finds it difficult to observe Sawm. It is permissible for them not to fast and to make up for the missed days of Sawm later, as Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ Some of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) said that they only have to feed instead poor people; however, the correct opinion is the first one. This is because they carry the same ruling as someone who is ill. The basic ruling is the obligation to make up for Sawm, and there is no other evidence to the contrary. This is confirmed by the Hadith on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Al-Ka'by (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾"Allah (may He be Exalted) has exempted the traveler from Sawm (Fasting) and half the Salah (Prayer), and (has exempted) the pregnant or breastfeeding woman from Sawm."﴿ (Related by

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Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Sunan (Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah) with a good Isnad [chain of narration]) This shows that they take the same ruling as travelers, so they should not perform Sawm and make up for it later. As for shortening Salah, this ruling is specific to travelers, and no other cases come under their ruling, according to which a four-Rak'ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units) is shortened into two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer). May Allah grant us success!

Q: is it permissible for a pregnant or breastfeeding woman to not observe Sawm (Fasting) in Ramadan? Do they have to make up for the missed Sawm? Please advise with evidence from Hadith on this issue. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Regarding pregnant and breastfeeding women, it was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) - in a Hadith on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Al-Ka'by related by Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah) with a Sahih (authentic) Isnad (chain of narrators) - that he (peace be upon him) gave them a Rukhsah (concession) not to observe Sawm, regarding them the same as the traveler. From this it is learned that they are permitted not to fast and can make up for the missed days later, as is the case of the traveler. Some scholars said that it is impermissible for them not to observe Sawm unless they find it difficult, as is the case of someone who is ill, or if they are afraid that the Sawm will cause harm to their babies. And Allah knows best!

Q: Is it permitted for a pregnant or suckling mother to break her fast in Ramadan and if so, what should they do? Should they make up for the missed days or pay expiation for them?

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A: The pregnant and the suckling woman takes the ruling applied to an ill person, which involves that if fasting is difficult for them, it is legal for them to break their fast and they are to make up for the missed days when they are capable of doing so. Some scholars are of the view that it suffices for them to feed a poor person for having avoided fasting on each day, but this is a weak opinion while the most correct opinion is that they are under the same rule as a traveler or sick person. Allah (Exalted be He) says, ﴾but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴿ This is indicated by a Hadith of Anas Ibn Malik Al-Ka`by who narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Allah has remitted a traveler to break fast (and make up for that after that) and shorten Salah (prayer). Similarly, a woman who is suckling an infant and a woman who is pregnant may break fast (and make up for that after that).﴿ (Related by the Five Compilers of Hadith (Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah))

62- The view that the pregnant and the breastfeeding women are exempted from making up for the missed fasts is Marjuh i.e. weak.

Q: Nine years ago, I was pregnant with my first son. I asked a scholar who preaches the Salaf methodology [Salafiyyah i.e. those following the way of the righteous predecessors)]

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about what to do when Ramadan starts while I am unable to fast due to pregnancy. He told me that I am not obliged to fast using the following Hadith as a proof: (Allah has remitted a traveler to shorten Salah (prayer) and permitted a woman who is suckling an infant and the woman who is pregnant to break the fast [during Ramadan].) **He also added that no Kaffarah (expiation) is due. Consequently, I did not fast in the months of Ramadan during which I was pregnant or breastfeeding. I did so for four years. Later, one knowledgeable brother told me that I only have to offer Kaffarah taking the following report as a proof: Ibn `Abbas saw his breastfeeding freedwoman and told her that she is regarded as those who are able to fast Ramadan. So, she did not have to make up for the missed fasts but she has to offer Kaffarah. I, therefore, used a sum of money in feeding needy people as a Kaffarah for the four months of Ramadan. Yet, I heard one of the scholars who participated in Nur `Ala Al-Darb show saying that my case requires me to make up for the missed fasts and if making them up is postponed, Kaffarah should be offered besides making up. What should I do? It is noteworthy that Ramadan approaches and I will give birth a few days before it. It will be the fifth Ramadan during which I do not fast. My question is: How authentic are the said Hadiths and reports? If I die before I make up for the five months of Ramadan, am I sinful? Please advise, may Allah reward you!**

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Kindly, be informed that I kept a sum of money aside for the purpose of feeding the needy. One day, a Muslim passer-by who needed money came to us. I gave him this sum intending to offer my Kaffarah. Is this act permissible or not?

A: The correct view is that the pregnant and the breastfeeding women must make up for the missed fasts. What is reported from Ibn `Abbas and Ibn `Umar that the pregnant and breastfeeding women must feed needy people is Marjuh and in conflict with the Shar`y evidence. Allah (may He be Praised) says: (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) Pregnant and breastfeeding women are regarded as those who are ill and they are not like the disabled old people. They take the same ruling as the sick. They have to make up for the missed fasts. When they postpone the making up for a Shar`y excuse, they do not have to offer Kaffarah, but they only have to make up for these days. Yet, if the pregnant and breastfeeding women are heedless and do not make up while they are able to do so, they have to offer Kaffarah (expiation) besides making it up. When the next Ramadan starts before they make up for the missed fasts due to their heedlessness or laziness, they have to offer

Kaffarah besides making them up. On the other hand, when they postpone the act of making them up due to a new pregnancy or breastfeeding, they only have to make up for the missed fasts. With regards to your act of feeding the needy, it will be rewarded as an act for Allah's sake. It would also suffice for the required Kaffarah if you were heedless to make up for the missed fasts. You still have to make up for the missed fasts according to your capability. You do not have to fast these days consecutively.

You may fast for a day or some days and break your fast until Allah help you make up for the days missed. When a servant is sincere and truthful, Allah will help and guide him/her. Receive glade tidings. You should be sincere and truthful and should seek Allah's help as He (may He be Praised) is the One Who grants success and Whose help is sought.

Q: A woman broke her fast during Ramadan for three successive years because she was pregnant. She was ignorant of the ruling and no one guided her to the truth. Some people advised her that she should pay a Kaffarah (expiation), which is to feed a Miskin (needy) and not to make up for the broken fast. Please, advise us with this regard. May Allah reward you greatly.

A: According to the Shar`y proofs, the correct view is that she should make up for the broken fast only and she does not have to pay Kaffarah. Saying that she has to pay Kaffarah only is wrong. She has to make up for the broken fast only if she had an excuse such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, or suffering from an illness. However, if she had an opportunity to make up for the broken fast but she neglected to fast, she should make up for them and pay Kaffarh. The Kaffarah is to feed a Miskin for every day she missed. She should give half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) that is equal to the measuring of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which amounts to 1.5 kg, of dates, rice, or any of the staple food of her country. A woman should always fear Allah

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with regard to offering Salah, observing Sawm (fast), and all the acts of worship. Both, men and women, should fear Allah and pay attention to religious matters. They should repent of the past negligence and strive to carry out their obligations. The Sawm of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is Wajib (obligatory) upon the Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions), men and women, to observe fasting in Ramadan. If anyone breaks their fast due to illness or they were on a journey, they should make up for the broken fast. If a woman finds it hard to fast due to menstruation, pregnancy or breastfeeding, she should make up for the broken fast before the next Ramadan when she is capable of doing so. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling on a person who did not fast Ramadan out of ignorance and lack of Islamic awareness in their country?

A: Being ignorant of fasting Ramadan does not exempt her from making up for the broken fast. Fasting Ramadan is a known matter to all Muslims.

This is a message from `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother Sheikh `A.M. May Allah guide him to goodness, amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

We send you a copy of a letter we received from His Excellency Sheikh `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Humayd, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judiciary Council along with a copy sent to Him from His Excellency, our brother Sheikh Muhammad Mahda Al-Nabir including some of your Fatwas (legal opinions issued by a qualified Muslim scholar). We chose to write to you because your Fatwas involved disagreement with the evidence of the Shari`ah and the views of the majority of scholars. We exhort you not to deliver such Fatwas again and to give more care to the evidences of Shari`ah and examine matters well before giving Fatwas. It is better to counsel other scholars regarding anything that appears difficult to you and not to deliver Fatwas about controversial issues except after being certain, taking careful consideration and being content with regard to the proofs you have from the Shari`ah. It is known that the seeker of knowledge should not depend on strange opinions or adopt them in his Fatwas. Among the issues ascribed to you is

exempting the pregnant or suckling woman who breaks an obligatory fast from the duty of making up for the missed days and from feeding the poor, for no scholar adopts this except Ibn Hazm who stated this in his book "Al-Muhalla". This is an aberrant saying that goes against the evidence of the Shari`ah and the opinion of the majority of scholars and therefore, it should be left out and disregarded. The most preferable view is the obligation of a pregnant or suckling woman to make up

for the missed days. according to the general proofs of the Shari`ah regarding those who are sick and traveling that are applied here, as well as the Hadith of Anas Ibn Malik Al-Ka`by in this regard.

Also, among the issues attributed to you is affirming the view that it is obligatory on a person on a journey or in a desert and women to offer Jumu`ah (Friday) and Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer) even though the evidence of Shari`ah and the views of the people of knowledge are clear that it is not obligatory on them except Ibn Hazm who mentioned in his book "Al-Muhalla" that these prayers are obligatory on travelers. However, this is an irregular view that contradicts the legal evidence and the opinions of scholars and therefore it should be disregarded.

Moreover, another issue that is attributed to you is that if a person performs Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer), he is not required to offer Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer or Jumu`ah Prayer if `Eid (feast) is on a Friday. However, this is a clear mistake for Allah made it obligatory on His Slaves to offer five prayers during the day and night and Muslims agree on this. The fifth prayer on Friday is Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer even if `Eid comes on a Friday and if Zhuhr Prayer are exempted from those who offer `Eid Prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have notified us about this

for it may be not known to people but he (peace be upon him) made a concession for those who attend `Eid Prayer to quit observing Jumu`ah Prayer and kept silent with regard to cancelling Zhuhr Prayer. This indicates that offering Zhuhr Prayer remains obligatory in accordance with the original ruling, the evidence of Shari`ah and the agreement of scholars on the obligation of five prayers during the day and night. The Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that he (peace be upon him) used to offer Jumu`ah Prayer during `Eid. Among these Hadiths is the one is narrated by Muslim in his Sahih on the authority of Al-Nu`man Ibn Bashir (that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite in the Friday Prayer and in the `Eid Prayer "Glorify the name of your most high Lord" (Surah-Al-A`la) and Surah-Al-Ghashiyah and sometimes `Eid and Friday were on the same day, so he recited these two (Surahs) in both the prayers.) There is a Hadith that Ibn Al-Zubayr offered `Eid Prayer and did not go out to the people after that for either Jumu`ah or Zhuhr Prayer. This is explained by saying that he offered Jumu`ah Prayer in the time of `Eid and was satisfied with it or that he thought that the Imam that day was like any other person on any other day and that he did not have to offer Jumu`ah Prayer but he could offer it as Zhuhr in his house.

In any case, the general evidence of Shari`ah, the adopted principles and the established agreement of scholars affirm the obligation of Zhuhr Prayer on accountable persons who do not offer Jumu`ah Prayer and all of this deserves precedence over the act of Ibn Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) if this illustrates that Ibn Al-Zubayr believed in absolving those who attended `Eid Prayer from Jumu`ah and Zhuhr Prayer.

If there remains any ambiguity for you, you are welcome to visit us in Al-Ta'if or to write to us concerning this to identify the points of confusion so that we can elaborate on it, if Allah wills.

We implore to Allah (Exalted be He) to grant us success and all our brothers understanding in religion and enable us to hold fast to it and position us among those who guide and are rightly guided for He is the Most Generous. I am waiting for a letter from you indicating that you have recognized this and will abide by it. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

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63- It is desirable to break the fast while traveling even if fasting is not difficult

Q: A brother from Ha'il asks: The Imam of our Masjid (mosque) frequently tells people that whoever travels and breaks their fast during Ramadan will have a double reward: One for applying Rukhsah (concession) and another for making up for the day(s) he missed. Are there Hadiths related in this regard? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is permissible for both the sick and travelers to break their fast, this is desirable for them because Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.)

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) also says: (Allah loves people to avail themselves of His Rukhsah (concession) just as He hates them to commit sin.) As for a sick person, it must be difficult for them to fast. If it is not difficult for them to fast, then it is not permissible for them to break their fast because in such a case they are not considered to be excused. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on breaking the fast while traveling by a comfortable means of transport

Q: Is it permissible for a person traveling by a comfortable means of transport to break their fast during Ramadan?

A: Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴿ Thus, Allah absolutely permitted breaking Sawm (fasting) while traveling. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ﴾Allah loves people to avail themselves of His Rukhsah (concession) just as He hates them to commit sin.﴿ Breaking fast while traveling is an act of Sunnah done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

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Yet if a Muslim knows that his breaking fast while traveling will make it hard for him to make up for it and will cost him in the future, and thus he fasted for such a cause, this is good and there is no harm in it, whether the means of transport is comfortable or uncomfortable because of the generality of evidences. May Allah grant us success!

Q: We now live in a time where comfortable means of transport are available including cars, planes, and trains. Praise be to Allah, a fasting person can travel for long distances without feeling fatigue, particularly when traveling by plane. Thus, which is better for a traveler, to observe fasting or to break it?

A: It is optional for a traveler to fast or to break his fast. Yet it is evident from the legal proofs that it is better to break one's fast, especially if it is difficult for them to observe fasting because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("It is not from piety to fast while traveling.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (Allah loves people to avail themselves

of His Rukhsah (concession) just as He hates them to commit sin.) There is no harm for a person who observes Sawm (fast) if it is not difficult for him. Yet if it is hard for him, then this is Makruh (reprehensible) for him. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Is it better for a traveler to break their fast in Ramadan or to fast, especially if the person will not face any hardships such as traveling by plane or any of the modern means of transportation?

A: It is absolutely better for a traveler to break their fast. However, a person is not to be blamed if they fast for it was reported that both manners were adopted by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). If it is too hot and hardships increase, it is necessary for a traveler to break his fast and Sawm becomes Makruh (reprehensible). It is narrated that ⟪the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man who was on a journey and taking a shade from the utmost heat and in the same time he was observing fasting. Upon this he (the Prophet) asked, "What is the matter with him?" They said, "He is fasting." Whereupon, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "It is not righteousness that you fast while you are traveling."⟫ It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him)

said, ⟪Allah loves people to avail themselves of His Rukhsah (concession) just as He hates them to commit sin.⟫ According to an another wording: ⟪"as He likes them to observe their obligations."⟫

There is no difference between traveling by car, camel, and ship or traveling by planes. They are all forms of travel and they take its prescribed Rukhsah (concession). Allah (Glorified be He) enjoined for His slaves the rulings on traveling and residency during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) until the Day of Resurrection. He (Glorified be He) knows the change of conditions and the various means of transportation. If the ruling on traveling were to change, He (Glorified be He) would have stated this. In Surah Al-Nahl, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ⟪And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allâh as Muslims).⟫ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ⟪And (He has created) horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment. And He creates (other) things of which you have no knowledge.⟫

65 - It is safer for a traveler to complete his Sawm and complete his Salah if he determines to stay more than four days

Your Eminence Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn Baz, may Allah safeguard and guide you to everything which pleases Him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

We would like to ask your Eminence about an issue about which you gave a fatwa before but some people objected to this saying that you gave a different fatwa on the same issue. So, we will not feel comfortable until we ask you again about it. We live in a valley near Al-Qasim and we move, as most Bedouins do, from one place to another. We have some palm trees at the boundaries of Hijaz near Al-Far` valley where we reside for some time waiting for the time of harvest. The period which we spend there ranges from one to one and a half month. We then return to our cattle and families. During that period, we do not take our families with us. Your eminence gave us an oral fatwa that there is

no harm in shortening Salah and breaking Sawm (fasting) during that period and so we did that for three years. You only gave the Fatwa after asking many questions about the case and ascertaining the real case, conditions and asking about the description of our stay and travel.

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Some people confused when they came with a different Fatwa. As the matter is great and a pillar of Islam, would you, please, give a Fatwa about this? May Allah safeguard you!

Wa `alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!)

I have studied the letter submitted by my Muslim brother M.R.H. under the supervision of Shaykh `A.S.`A. concerning the ruling on breaking Sawm and shortening Salah for those who travel for a distance, which is considered a case of travel, to their palm trees at the boundaries of Hijaz near Al-Far` Valley where they stay for one or one and a half months waiting for harvest. They heared some people repeat a different fatwa and wanted to make sure about their own Fatwa.

Answer: In the past, I thought that determining the duration of travel has no evident proof from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and I used to give a fatwa according to this understanding that it is permissible to shorten Salah and break the Sawm if the traveler stays for a while to fulfill some needs even if he might stay for more than four days. But I do not remember that I have given you a fatwa on this issue before and you may be truthful in this. But I would like to tell you that it is safer for a traveler, if he determines to stay more than four days to complete his Salah and continue Sawm to avoid conflict of opinions which

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many people use as a pretext to permit shortening Salah and breaking Sawm because they are travelers while they reside for a long period. It is safer, according to my view, not to do this in order to avoid the difference of scholars who maintain that when a traveler makes up his mind to stay for a period of time, which exceeds four days, then there is no concession to shorten Salah or break Sawm in Ramadan. Taking precaution when proofs are ambiguous is required by Shari`ah, because the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: (Leave what causes you doubt and turn to what does not cause you doubt.) The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ("So he who guards himself against doubtful things keeps his religion and honor blameless...") I ask Allah to guide all the people to understand His religion and be firm on it for He is All-Hearing, All-Near. As-salamu `Alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!).

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz.

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Eminence Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz, the Mufty (Islamic scholar qualified to issue legal opinions) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance. May Allah safeguard him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

My brothers and I own a farm on Al-Kharj Harad Road. The farm is 65 km away from Al-Kharj and 140 km away from Riyadh. We live in the City of Riyadh and we usually travel to control and follow up the work at the farm.

I hope that you will tell us about the ruling on shortening and combining the Salah (Prayer) and breaking Sawm (Fast) in the daytime of Ramadan in the following cases:

1- When we travel to spend a day or part of a day to follow up with work at the farm.

2- When we go to spend the weekend at the farm to rest and to follow up with work.

3- When we travel to spend the mid year vacation which is about two weeks at the farm.

4- Is it permissible for us to break our Sawm when we go to our farm in the daytime of Ramadan

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although there is no kind of hardship and our houses are furnished with all conveniences at the farm?

5- Does the same ruling apply to our relatives and friends who accompany us to the farm? Please, send us your reply in writing. May Allah guide you to what pleases Him! Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Respondent!

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

If the reality is as you have mentioned, it is permissible for you and those who accompany you to the farm to shorten and combine Salah as well as to break your Sawm during the daytime of Ramadan. However, if you determine spend more than four days at the farm, it will be impermissible for you all to shorten and combine Salah or break your Sawm in the daytime of Ramadan. May Allah grant us success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

`Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

Q: If I am traveling during Ramadan and I am not observing Sawm (Fast) and upon my arrival to the other country where I am going to stay for some days I abstain from eating and drinking for the rest of that same day and for the next days; do I have a Rukhsah (concession) not to observe Sawm during these days when I am not staying in my country?

A: A traveler has a Rukhsah not to observe Sawm if they are going to stay at their destination only for four days or less. However, if such a traveler intends to stay in their destination for more than four days, they are to break their Sawm during their journey but upon their arrival, they should abstain from eating and drinking for the rest of the same day. This day has to be made up later and the traveler has to observe Sawm for the rest of the days as, by intending to stay in their destination for more than four days, they are considered residents, not travelers according to the majority of Muslim scholars. May Allah grant us success!

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Ruling on breaking Sawm due to hard work

From `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Humayd and `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Cabinet, may Allah protect him! Amen.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

I received your letter no. (18523), dated 24/11/1396 A.H. and the attachments. They include the recommendations of the tenth assembly of the Islamic Thought held in Algeria. You requested to review the fatwa included in the recommendations regarding the permissibility to break the fast during Ramadan for those who do hard work such as those who work in foundries and factories and do other kinds of hard work.

Kindly be informed that the basic principle is that it is obligatory to fast Ramadan and to determine to fast from the night before. This is the rule applied to all adult Muslims, who should start the day fasting, except for those to whom the Lawgiver has granted a concession to break fast such as the sick, travelers, and those who come under those categories. Those, who do hard works, come under the heading of those who are obliged to fast and they are not like the sick or travelers. They have to form the intention to observe the fast of Ramadan from the night before and to start the day fasting. If one of them is forced to break the fast during the day,

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then it is permissible for him to break the fast only to the extent that wards off any harm and he thus must refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day and later has to make up for that fast at the proper time. If there is no such necessity then it is obligatory to complete the fast. This is what is indicated by the shar`i evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah and it is what is indicated by the words of the scholars of all madh-habs. Those who are in positions of authority among the Muslims and have people who do hard work should examine their case when Ramadan comes, and if possible, they should not burden them with too much work that may force them to break the fast during the day in Ramadan. Instead, they should do the work at night or distribute the working hours in a fair and just manner so that people may both work and fast.

The fatwa referring to this has to do with an individual case where they issued a fatwa based on their Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) for which they are to be appreciated, but they did not mention the conditions that we have mentioned or the view of the scholars of all madh-habs. We ask Allah to help us all to do that is good.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Judiciary Council and Chairman of Religious Affairs of Al-Masjid Al-Haram	`Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Humayd
Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance	`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

67- Ruling on breaking one's Sawm because of exams

Q: I am a girl who was obliged not to observe Sawm (Fast) for six days of Ramadan because of exams. This was because exams started in Ramadan and I had so difficult subjects that I needed to break my Sawm to be able to study. Could you please tell me what I have to do to be forgiven by Allah? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: You have to make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) as it was impermissible for you not to observe Sawm for the reason mentioned in the question. Moreover, you have to make up for the days when you broke your Sawm. Verily, Allah accepts the Tawbah of those who make it. The real Tawbah with which Allah erases sins is that through which a person gives up the sin out of exalting Allah and fearing His punishment, feels remorse for what they have committed, and has a truthful determination not to commit the same sin again. If the sin is an act of wronging another person, such a person's right has to be given back to them or they may be asked to waive it. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾O you who believe! Turn to Allâh with sincere repentance!﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also

says: ﴾Tawbah wipes out all the previous misdeeds.﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Whoever has wronged his brother, should ask for his pardon (before his death), as (in the Hereafter) there will be neither a Dinar nor a Dirham. (He should secure pardon in this life) before some of his good deeds are taken and paid to his brother, or, if he has done no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother will be taken to be loaded on him (in the Hereafter)".﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith). May Allah grant us success!

Q: If the exams for high school graduation are held in Ramadan, is it permissible for a student to break his fast in Ramadan so that he will be able to concentrate on the exam?

A: It is not permissible for a person who is accountable to break his fast in Ramadan because of exams, because this is not one of the legal excuses considered in Shari`ah. Rather, he has to fast, and do his studying and revision at night if it is too hard for him to do that during the day. Those who are in charge of exams should be kind to the students and should not make the exams in Ramadan, thus serving two interests; the interests of the fast and that of helping the students to prepare for the exams. It was narrated in a Sahih (authentic) report from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him): (O Allah, whoever is put in charge of any of the affairs of my Ummah and is kind to them, show kindness towards him, and whoever is put in charge of any of the affairs of my Ummah and is harsh towards them, show harshness towards him.") Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book. So my advice to those who are in charge of exams is to be kind to the students and not to have exams in Ramadan, but to have them before or after. We ask Allah to grant us all success.

Q: Do school exams stand as a valid excuse for breaking Sawm (Fast) during Ramadan?

A: School exams and the like exams are not considered valid excuses for breaking Sawm during the daytime of Ramadan. Moreover, it is not permissible to obey the orders of one's parents to break Sawm because of exams, for (indeed no creature may be obeyed in what constitutes disobedience to the Creator.) (Rather, obedience (to somebody) is required when he enjoins what is good) as stated in the authentic Hadith reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Religious Intention: definition and rulings

68- The ruling on having the prior Niyyah (religious intention) for obligatory and supererogatory fasting

Q: What is the ruling on a person who has not learned that Ramadan has already started except after Fajr? How should they act?

A: Whoever does not know of the beginning of Ramadan except after Fajr should abstain from all fast invalidating things for the rest of the day, because this is a Ramadan day on which it is not permissible for a healthy resident (i.e. not a traveler) to engage in anything that breaks the fast. Moreover, since he has not intended in advance to fast, he has to make up for this day by fasting another one. It is authentically reported that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, (He who does not determine to fast before dawn does not have his fast rewarded.) Narrated by Al-Daraqatny with its Isnad (chain of narrators) from `Amrah from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her)

and Al-Daraqutny said all the transmitters in its Isnad are reliable and trustworthy.

It is also reported by Ibn Qudamah (may Allah be merciful to him) in Al-Mughni. This view is held by the majority of jurists. The ruling here is applied to the obligatory fasting, as mentioned in the noble Hadith. As for the supererogatory fasting, however, it is permissible for a person during the day if he or she has not broken their fast in any way after Fajr. That is because this is reported in an authentic Hadith. We implore Almighty Allah to guide us and all Muslims to that which pleases Him and to accept our fasting and Qiyam (supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan). Verily, He is All-Hearing, Near. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Messenger of Allah, and his family, and Companions.

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What invalidates fasting and necessitates Kaffarah

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Someone who was so thirsty that they drank must make up for the day and no Kaffarah is required

Q: What is the ruling on a man who was fasting in Ramadan and got so thirsty that he drank?

A: He must make up for that day by fasting another one, and no Kaffarah (expiation) is required of him. This is the more correct of the two views held by the scholars. If he took the matter lightly, he should repent to Allah and make up for this day. Regarding the Kaffarah, it is only required in the case of a person who has sexual relations with his wife during a Ramadan day, if fasting is obligatory on this person in the first place. That is because the relevant Hadith mentions this case particularly.

70- The person who eats, even by mistake, during the daytime of Ramadan should be denounced

Q: Some people say that if you see a Muslim drinking or eating out of forgetfulness during the day in Ramadan, you do not have to tell him, because Allah has fed him and given him to drink as the Hadith tells. Is this correct?

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Please give us a fatwa, may Allah reward you!

A: Whoever sees a Muslim drinking/eating during the day in Ramadan or doing anything else that breaks the fast, whether out of forgetfulness or deliberately, has to denounce this, because doing that openly during the day in Ramadan is wrong. Even if a person has an excuse for doing that forbidden things, he should not do it lest people should do these things openly i.e. do things that break the fast during the day in Ramadan, claiming that they have forgotten that they are fasting. If the one who does that openly is sincere in his claim to have forgotten, then he does not have to make up for the fast, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Whoever forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for the One Who fed him and gave him drink was Allah.﴾ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Similarly, a traveler should not eat or drink openly among residents who do not know that he is a traveler, rather he should do that in secret so that they will not accuse him of doing something that Allah has forbidden and so that he will not encourage anyone else to dare to do that. Similarly, the kuffar (disbelievers) should be prevented from openly eating or drinking etc., among the Muslims, so as to prevent anyone taking this matter lightly and because they are not allowed to practice their false religion openly among the Muslims. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on intramuscular and intravenous injections for someone observing fasting

Q: What is the ruling on a person who had intravenous and intramuscular injections during the day in Ramadan when he was fasting and completed his fast; was his fasting invalidated? Should he make up for it?

A: His fasting is valid, because an injection into a vein is not a kind of eating or drinking and this is applied with greater certainty to the case of an intramuscular injection. But if he makes it up in order to be on the safe side, that is better. If it can be delayed until nighttime and he needs to have it, that is better too, so as to avoid an area of scholarly dispute. May Allah grant us success!

Nutritive injections break fasting

Q: I have read in some books of Fiqh including Fiqh Al-Sunnah by Sheikh Sayyid Sabiq that nutritive injections and the like that are introduced to the body through any part of the body other than the mouth or throat do not cause the breaking of fasting.

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I know also that some scholars do not approve of that, so I want to know the opinion of the majority of scholars in this regard. May Allah reward you the best!

A: The correct view in the case at hand is that nutritive injections break fasting if taken willingly but this ruling is not applied to other injections. May Allah grant us success! May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling on intravenous and intramuscular injections? What is the difference between them with regard to a fasting person?

A: The truth is that they do not break the Sawm (fast). Only the nutritive injections break the Sawm. Likewise, taking a sample of blood for analysis does not break the Sawm, as it is not like Hijamah (cupping), which leads to breaking the Sawm for both the one who performs cupping as well as the one who is being treated by cupping according to the soundest view of scholars. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿The person who performs cupping as well as the one who has themselves cupped have broken their Sawm.﴾

Ruling on anesthetic injections and cleaning, filling, or extraction of teeth whilst fasting

Q: If a person has pain in his tooth, then a dentist cleans, fills or removes it, does it affect his fasting? Does an anesthetic injection invalidate fasting?

A: The things mentioned in the question do not have any effect on the validity of the fast. They are forgiven but a person should be careful to avoid swallowing any medicine or blood. Similarly, the injection mentioned does not have any effect on the validity of the fast, because it is not like food or drink. The basic principle is that the fast remains valid.

Ruling on using kohl and cosmetics during the daytime of Ramadan

Q: What is the ruling on women using kohl and some cosmetics during the daytime in Ramadan? Do these things break the fast or not?

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A: Kohl does not break the fast of either women or men, according to the more correct of the two opinions held by the scholars, but using it at night is preferable for one who is fasting. The same is applied to other things that are used to beautify the face such as soap, creams and the like which has to do with the outer layer of the skin. That also includes henna, make-up and the like, but make-up should not be used if it will harm the face. May Allah grant us success!

75-Ruling on using toothpaste, eardrops, and eye drops during Sawm

Q: What is the ruling on using toothpaste, eardrops, nasal drops, and eye drops while observing Sawm (Fasting)? What should the faster do if they find a taste of one of these in their throat?

A: Cleaning the teeth with toothpaste does not break the Sawm, as is the case with the Siwak (tooth-cleansing stick), but the fasting person should be careful that nothing enters their throat. If something unintentionally enters it, they are not required to make up for that day of Sawm. The same applies to eye drops and eardrops; they do not break Sawm, according to the more correct of the two opinions of the scholars.

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If someone notices the taste of drops in their throat, it is safer, but not obligatory, for them to make up for that day, because the ears and eyes are not inlet passages for food and liquids. Nasal drops, however, are not permissible during Sawm, because the nose is an inlet. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed saying, ("Exaggerate Istinshaq (inhaling and exhaling water nasally), except when you are fasting.") Anyone who does this must make up for that day, based on this Hadith and other reported Hadith with the same meaning, if they notice the taste of drops in their throat. With Allah is the success!

Q: Is it permissible for those who are observing Sawm (Fasting) to use toothpaste during the daytime in Ramadan?

A: There is nothing wrong in doing this, as long as they avoid swallowing any of it. It is also permissible to use Siwak (tooth-cleansing stick) while fasting at the beginning and end of the day. Some scholars held that it is Makruh (reprehensible) to use Siwak in the afternoon. This is the least likely correct opinion, and the more correct view is that it not Makruh, because of the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("Siwak purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord.") (Related by Al-Nasa'y through a Sahih [authentic] Isnad [chain of narrators] on the authority of 'Aishah [may Allah be pleased with her]) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, ("If it were not for the fear that I might make it hard for my Ummah (nation based on one creed),

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I would have commanded them to use the Siwak at the time of every Salah (Prayer).") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) This includes the Zhuhr (Noon) and 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayers, which are performed afternoon. With Allah is the success!

Q: A woman is complaining of a severe pain in her eyes and the doctor has prescribed eye drops for her, to be used three times a day. If she stops using them, she feels the pain. During Ramadan, is it permissible for her to use the drops during the daytime? It should be noted that she does not feel that they go down into her nose or throat.

A: If the reality is as you mentioned and that when she uses the eye drops, she does not feel them going down into her nose or throat, it is permissible for her to use them during the daytime in Ramadan when she is observing Sawm (Fasting); her using the eye drops will not affect the validity of her Sawm.

Q: During the daytime in Ramadan, when I was performing Sawm (Fasting), I put drops in my eyes before Imsak (the time of day that marks the beginning of the Fast), but I did not know that it would break my Sawm. After I had learned this from one of the episodes of "Nur 'Ala Al-Darb" program, I forgot, and put some drops in my eyes, which descended into my pharynx.

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I felt this as I noticed a bitterness in my mouth. What is the ruling on this?

A: The correct opinion is that using eye drops or kohl does not break the Sawm, according to the more correct of the two opinions held by the scholars. Some scholars say that they only break the Sawm if the taste is noticed in the throat. But the first opinion is the correct one, because the eyes, and also the ears, are not inlet passages for nutrition. There is no harm in making made up for that day, to be in the safe side. It is, however, preferable for the person observing Sawm to use eye drops or kohl during the night, to be on the safe side and avoid the difference of scholarly opinion.

Q: Sister, S. L. L. from Kuwait asks a question as to whether using eye drops during the daytime in Ramadan breaks the Sawm (Fasting) or not.

A: The correct opinion is that eye drops do not break the Sawm, although scholars have differed over this. Some scholars have said that if the taste of the drops is noticed in the throat, this has broken the Sawm. The correct opinion is that they do not break the Sawm at all, because eyes are not inlet passages for nutrition. However, there is no harm in making up for this day to be on the safe side and to avoid the difference of scholarly opinion, if they have been used and the taste noticed in the throat. But the correct opinion is that they do not break the Sawm, whether they are eye drops or ear drops.

76-Ruling on the use of eye drops and spray during Sawm

From 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz **to the respected brother Y. A. A.; may Allah guide him! Amen!**

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your letter, dated 11/23/1419 - and may you receive Allah's Guidance - and understood the questions included in.

The first question is about using nasal spray when necessary during Sawm (Fasting).

The answer is that there is nothing wrong in using it if it is necessary, but it is safer to delay using it until the night if possible.

The second question is about using eye drops while observing Sawm. The answer is that there is nothing wrong in using them, but also it is safer and preferable to delay using them until the night.

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President of the Council of Senior Scholars and Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

Q: What is the ruling on asthmatic patients or others using mouth inhalers during the daytime while observing Sawm (Fasting)?

A: The ruling is that it is Mubah (permissible), if it is a necessity to do so. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾while He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you, except under compulsion of necessity﴿ There is no doubt that an inhaler does not resemble food or drink; it is more similar to taking blood for testing and non-nutritious injections.

77- The ruling on a person who vomits while fasting

Q: What is the ruling on someone who vomits involuntarily while fasting? Should they make up for that day or not?

A: The ruling is that such a person does not have to make up for that day. If, however, the vomiting is willingly induced, s/he has to make up for that day by fasting another day. This is related in a Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("He who vomits involuntarily is not required to make up for the fast and whoever deliberately vomits should make up the missed days.") Reported

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by Imam Ahmed and the compilers of the four Sunan with an authentic Isnad (chain of narrators) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Q: Does vomiting invalidate fasting?

A: Fasting people often experience a number of things unintentionally. They may get wounded, have nosebleeds, or vomit. Likewise, water or benzene may get into their throat involuntarily. All these things do not invalidate the fast, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, ("He who vomits involuntarily is not required to make up for the fast and whoever deliberately vomits shall make up for the missed days.")

Ruling on smelling perfume and aloes-wood while observing sawm

A: Is it permissible for someone who is fasting to smell perfume and aloes-wood?

A: It is not permissible for the fasting person to inhale aloes-wood, but there is nothing wrong with any type of perfume other than incense. As for aloes-wood itself, it must not be inhaled, because some of the scholars are of the opinion that inhalation of aloes-wood breaks the Sawm, for it goes to the cerebrum and brain, and has strong pervasion. However, smelling it unintentionally does not break the Sawm.

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Q: Is it permissible to use perfume, such as aloes-wood, cologne, and incense, during the daytime in Ramadan?

A: Yes, it is permissible to use them, on condition that incense is not inhaled.

Ruling on masturbation in the daytime of Ramadan

Q: What is the ruling on a young person who masturbates during the daytime of Ramadan while observing Sawm (Fasting)?

A: Masturbation during the daytime of Ramadan breaks the Sawm, if it is done deliberately, and if it results in emission of Maniy (sperm/vaginal secretions that are released on orgasm). They are required to make up for that day, if the Sawm was obligatory. They should also make Tawbah (repentance to Allah), because masturbation - which is sometimes called "the secret habit" - is not permissible, whether during Sawm or not.

80 - Desirous discharge of Madhy does not nullify fasting

Q: If one kisses his wife while fasting or watches some

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obscene movies, and thus Madhy (pre-seminal fluid) is discharged, is he obligated to make up for his fasting? If this happens during several days, does making up for the days of fasting have to be consecutive or separate? May Allah reward you with the best reward!

A: Discharging Madhy does not nullify fasting, according to the sounder of the two opinions of Muslim scholars, whether it is discharged due to kissing one's wife, watching some movies or due to other temptations that may arouse desire. However, a Muslim is not allowed to watch obscene movies or to listen to unlawful songs or musical instruments. As for the discharge of Maniy (sperm/vaginal secretions that are released on orgasm) with desire, it nullifies fasting, whether it happens due to a physical cause, kissing, frequent looking at the opposite gender or due to other causes that may arouse desire such as masturbation and similar things. As for wet dreams and thinking of intimate relations, they do not violate fasting even if they result in discharge. On the other hand, it is not necessary to fast consecutive days in making up for the missed days of Ramadan fasting; they can be made up for separately due to the generality of Allah's Saying: ﴾but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴿

81 - Ruling on looking at women while fasting

Q: A brother from Tunisia asks: If one

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intentionally looks at a woman who is marriageable to him while he is fasting due to her beauty, clothing or body, does this violate his fasting? Or is it reprehensible to do that and Allah will accept his fasting but will punish him for looking? Please provide us with a Fatwa regarding this, may Allah reward you with the best reward!

A : It is prohibited for one to look at women, and if this looking is accompanied with desire, then the prohibition is more serious, because of Allah's (Glorified be He) saying: ﴿Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts).﴾ This is also because looking at women is a means to adultery. Therefore, it is an obligation to lower one's gaze and to be cautious of the causes of temptation. However, the fasting of this person who looks at women will not be nullified if there is no discharge; otherwise, his fasting will be nullified and he has to make up for this day, if it is a mandatory fasting. May Allah grant us success!

82- The ruling if a fasting man shakes hands with a non-Mahram woman

Q: What is the ruling on shaking hands with or talking to a non-Mahram (not a spouse or an unmarriageable relative) woman during the day in Ramadan when both are fasting? Does it render Sawm (fasting) null and void? Please, advise in this regard. Does doing so entail a Kaffarah (expiation)?

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A: Shaking hands with a non-Mahram woman is impermissible. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I do not shake hands with women.﴿ Moreover, `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴾By Allah, the hand of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) never touched the hand of any woman, but he only used to take their pledge of allegiance orally.﴿ The women being referred to here are non-Mahram women. However, it is unobjectionable to shake hands with a Mahram (a spouse or an unmarriageable relative) woman, such as one's sister or aunt.

There is nothing wrong with talking to a non-Mahram woman provided that it is unsuspicious permissible talk such as asking a woman about her children or father or about something he needs as a neighbor or a relative. However, if talks are raising sexual desires or leads to adultery times or if he asks her to unveil some of her beauty, it will be impermissible. However, it will be unobjectionable to make unsuspicious conversation with a woman who is veiled and decent. Actually, the Prophet (peace be upon him) talked to women and they talked to him. Thus, doing so is unobjectionable. Moreover, Sawm is not affected by shaking hands with or talking to woman provided that no seminal fluid

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is discharged. However, if it is discharged, Ghusl (ritual bath) becomes obligatory and the Sawm will be null and void, which has to be made up for if it is an obligatory Sawm. In fact, it is obligatory on a Muslim to be on his guard against that which Allah (Exalted be He) has prohibited and he should not shake hands with a non-Mahram woman, make a sexually-oriented conversation with her, or leer at her. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what they do.﴿ Thus, blocking all the means leading to evil is obligatory on a Muslim wherever he may be. We ask Allah to protect us against all sorts of evil.

83- Bleeding does not invalidate Sawm unless it is caused by cupping

Q: Should a person observing Sawm (Fast) break or complete the Sawm if he bleeds?

A: Bleeding does not affect a person's Sawm unless it is caused by cupping. Although scholars differ on whether the Sawm of a cupped person is broken, the sound opinion is that the Sawm of such a person is broken. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The Sawm of a man who cupped and a man who has himself cupped is broken.) As for nosebleed

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and wounds on the legs or hands while fasting, they do not invalidate Sawm.

Q: In what cases does bleeding invalidate Sawm (fast)?

A: Sawm is only invalidated by cupping according to the soundest opinion. Although it is a widely controversial issue and the majority of scholars maintains that Sawm is not invalidated by cupping but the preponderant view is that it is invalidated by cupping.

Ruling on blood donation

Q: What is the rule which judges that bleeding invalidates Sawm (fast)? How does it invalidate Sawm?

A: Bleeding that invalidates Sawm is that which is caused by cupping. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in this regard: ﴾The Sawm of a man who cupped and a man who has himself cupped is broken.﴿ The same ruling is extended from cupping to other similar practices including

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any intentional bleeding which might cause a continuous discharge of blood as may weaken one's body. Actually, the Shari`ah (Islamic law) makes no distinction between similar cases and does differentiate between non-similar cases. Unintentional bleeding such as nosebleed or wounds caused by a knife on cutting meat, by treading on broken glass or the like, do not invalidate Sawm even if a lot of blood is discharged. The same applies to a short discharge of blood that does not have an effect like that of cupping, such as a sample extracted for blood analysis, which does not invalidate Sawm.

Q: What is the ruling on bleeding such as nosebleed and the like while observing Sawm (fast)? Is it permissible for a person observing Sawm to donate blood or give a sample for blood analysis?

A: When observing Sawm, if a person has a nosebleed, Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period) or the like, this does not invalidate Sawm. Only menstruation, postpartum bleeding and cupping invalidate Sawm. It is also permissible for a person observing Sawm to give a sample for blood analysis when needed, which may not invalidate Sawm. As for blood donation, it is better to delay it until after breaking the fast, for in most cases it causes much bleeding which makes it similar to cupping. May Allah grant us success!

Drawing a blood sample from a fasting person for blood analysis

Q: What is the ruling on drawing blood from someone who is observing Sawm (fast) during Ramadan from the right hand for blood analysis estimated as a medium syringe?

A: Blood analysis does not invalidate Sawm and is pardonable, as it is often needed. Moreover, it is not one of the well-known invalidators of Sawm as laid down by the Purified Shari`ah (Islamic law).

86- Ruling on hemodialysis during Sawm

Q: What is the ruling on hemodialysis for a kidney patient while observing Sawm (Fast)? Should he make up for the day he missed?

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A: He has to make up for the day on which he is supplied with pure blood. Any other substance added to the blood is another invalidator of Sawm.

87- Sawm is not invalidated by a wet dream, bleeding or vomiting

Q: While I was observing Sawm (fast), I slept in the Masjid (mosque). On getting up, I found that I had had a wet dream. Does a wet dream affect Sawm, bearing in mind that I offered Salah (Prayer) without taking a Ghusl (ritual bath)? At other time, a stone hit my head and caused me to bleed; is my Sawm broken because of bleeding? Moreover, does vomiting invalidate Sawm? Please, advise!

A: Having a wet dream does not invalidate Sawm, as it is overpowering. However, when a person has a wet dream, he has to take a Ghusl (ritual bath following major ritual impurity) if seminal fluid is discharged. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about a similar situation, he replied that one who has a wet dream has to take a Ghusl if seminal fluid discharges. However, offering Salah without taking a Ghusl is a mistake and a grave error. You have to re-perform the Salah after taking Ghusl and repent to Allah (may He be Praised). As for bleeding because of being hit by a stone,

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it does not invalidate Sawm. Furthermore, unintentional vomiting does not invalidate Sawm. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who vomits unintentionally is not required to make up for the fast and whoever deliberately vomits shall make up for the missed days.﴿ (Related by Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) through a trustworthy chain of narrators.)

Q: Brother N.T.`A. says: Someone had a wet dream and seminal fluid discharged while sleeping during one day in Ramadan. Should he make up for that day, bearing in mind that he did not break his Sawm (fast) till sunset, i.e. continued fasting the whole day?

A: The person does not have to make up for that day, for, in fact, the occurrence of wet dreams is beyond one's will. However, he has to take a Ghusl (ritual bath) once he has seen seminal fluid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Ghusl is necessary upon seminal discharge.﴿ ﴾When Um Sulaym asked him (peace be upon him) whetherone who had a wet dream has to take a Ghusl, he (peace be upon him) said, "Yes, once seminal fluid is seen."﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhri and Muslim.)

Ruling on delaying Ghusl until after dawn for a Junub, a menstruating woman and a woman having postpartum blood

Q: Brother A.M.`A. from Riyadh, asks: If a fasting person has a wet dream during the day in Ramadan, is his Sawm (fast) invalidated? Must this person take a Ghusl (ritual bath)?

A: Wet dreams do not invalidate Sawm, as the occurrence of wet dreams is beyond one's will. However, anyone who has a wet dream must take a Ghusl (ritual bath following major ritual impurity) if seminal fluid is discharged. Moreover, it will be unobjectionable to delay Ghusl till it is time for Dhuhr (Noon) Salah (Prayer) if one had a wet dream after Fajr (dawn) Salah. Likewise, it is also unobjectionable to delay taking a Ghusl till dawn if one has sexual intercourse during the night. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have (used to get up in the morning while Junub (in a state of major ritual impurity) from intercourse and would perform Ghusl and observe Sawm.) Similarly, it is unobjectionable that a menstruating woman or a woman having postpartum blood take a Ghusl after dawn if they become pure during the night, in which case their Sawm will be valid. However, it is impermissible for them and for a Junub to delay taking Ghusl till the sun shines. Rather, they have to take Ghusl before the sun shines so that they may perform Salah at its due time. Furthermore, a man who is in state of Janabah (major ritual impurity) has to take a Ghusl before

Fajr (Dawn) Salah so that he can offer the Salah in congregation. Furthermore, a menstruating woman or a woman having postpartum blood has to take a Ghusl at night if she becomes pure during the night so that she may offer Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Salah as judged by some Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Similarly, she has to take a Ghusl if she becomes pure in the afternoon so that she may offer Dhuhr and `Asr (Afternoon) Salahs before sunset. May Allah grant us success.!

Q: Is it permissible to delay Ghusl (ritual bath following major ritual impurity) till the break of dawn? Is it permissible for women to delay Ghusl following the menstruation or postpartum periods until the break of dawn?

A: If a woman becomes pure before dawn, she has to observe Sawm (fast). In such a case, it will be permissible for her to delay taking a Ghusl till the break of dawn. However, she may not delay it till the sun shines and has to take a Ghusl and perform Fajr (Dawn) Salah (Prayer) beforehand. Likewise, a Junub (a person in a state of major ritual impurity) may not delay taking a Ghusl till after the sun shines. Rather, such a person has to take a Ghusl and perform Fajr Salah before the sun shines. In the case of a male, he has to take a Ghusl so that he may perform Fajr Salah in congregation.

89- Ruling on the Sawm of someone who swallows water involuntarily

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the reverend brother M.A.D., Imam of Masjid Qanbar in Al-Khamis, may Allah grant him success! Amen.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

I have received your letter dated 1/1/1394 A.H. (may Allah guide you) that implies consoling in regards to the departure of His Eminence Shaykh/ Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shinqity (may Allah be merciful with him). I ask Allah to answer your supplication, comfort everyone regarding missing him, encompass him with His Grace and Pleasure, set upright his offspring and grant Muslims a good successor of him, for He is the Most Generous, All-Bountiful! Following are the answer of the three questions:

Q: Overpowered by water pressure, a fasting person, while taking a Ghusl (ritual bath), swallowed some water involuntarily. Should he make up for that day?

A: This person does not have to make up for the day because he did so involuntarily. Actually, the same ruling of a coerced and forgetful person applies to him.

90- Snuff water well except when you are fasting!

Q: Is it permissible to sniff water and rinse the mouth during the daytime in Ramadan for a person observing Sawm (Fast)?

A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said to Laqit ibn Subrah: ﴾Perform Wudu' (ablution) in full and make water go through the fingers and snuff water well except when you are fasting.﴿ Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to perform Wudu' (ablution) in full and then said: ﴾Snuff water well except when you are fasting.﴿ This indicates that a person observing Sawm (Fast) may sniff water or rinse the mouth but should not exaggerate in doing so in such a manner as may cause him to swallow water. However, sniffing water and rinsing one's mouth are inevitable while performing Wudu' (ablution) or Ghusl (ritual bath) as they are fundamentals therein whether one is observing Sawm (Fast) or otherwise.

91- Ruling on Fasting calendars distributed during Ramadan

Q: Brother M.S.A., from Riyadh, asks:

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Some companies and institutions distribute Ramadan Fasting calendars. These calendars define the times of Salah (Prayer). What astonished me is that they define a time for abstaining from eating and drinking (as marking the beginning of the Fast) that is fifteen minutes before the Adhan (call to Prayer) of Fajr (Dawn). Does doing so have any grounds in the Sunnah? Give us a Fatwa. May Allah reward you! Kindly find attached a copy of one calendar.

A: I know of no grounds for such definition. Moreover, the Qur'an and Sunnah clearly indicate that abstaining form eating and drinking starts at the break of dawn. Allah (may He be Praised) says in this regard: ﴾and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)﴿ To the same effect, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾There are two kinds of Fajr; the first which forbids eating and allows for Salah, and the second in which Salah is impermissible (Fajr prayer) and eating food is permissible.﴿ (Related by ibn Khuzaymah and Al-Hakim and is judged by both of them to be authentic as in Bulughul-Maram.) Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Actually, Bilal pronounces Adhan at night, so keep on eating and drinking (Suhur) till Ibn Umm Maktum pronounces Adhan. ﴿

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The narrator said: Ibn Umm Maktum was a blind man who did not call the Adhan until someone said to him: "The morning has come! The morning has come!" (Agreed upon by both Al-Bukhari and Muslim.) May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on eating the predawn meal while the Mu'adhin is announcing the Adhan

Q: Is it permissible to continue eating the predawn meal while the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) is announcing the second Adhan (call to Prayer)?

A: This issue needs to be detailed. If the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) is announcing the Adhan for Fajr (Dawn) Prayer (he is announcing the Adhan when Fajr has really broken), you must abstain from eating and drinking. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not stop your Suhur (predawn meal) when you hear the Adhan of Bilal, for he proclaims the Adhan at night. So, eat and drink until you hear the Adhan of Ibn Umm Maktum.﴿ This comes in accordance with Allah's (Exalted be He) says: ﴾and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)﴿ If it is known that Fajr (Dawn) has broken, even without any Adhan (caller to Prayer), like if one is in the desert, then one has to abstain from eating and drinking even if no Adhan is heard. However, if the Mu'dhin (caller to Prayer) announces the Adhan too early or there is any doubt concerning whether his Adhan coincides with dawn or not, you are allowed to eat and drink

until you are sure that dawn has broken, whether that is known through a reliable alarm clock adjusted to ring at dawn or through a trustworthy Adhan which is known to be announced at the time of dawn. In this case (if the Adhan is too early), you are allowed to eat or drink what is in your hand whilst the Adhan is being announced, because there is a good range of doubt regarding whether the Adhan is marking the break of down or otherwise.

93- One's eating after the break of dawn makes Sawm invalid

Q: A Muslim continued eating the predawn meal as he did not know that dawn had broken. Should he continue observing Sawm (Fast) and abstaining from eating and drinking, or has he to make up for that day? May Allah reward you well!

A: It is obligatory upon a Muslim observing an obligatory Sawm (Fast) to abstain from eating once the dawn breaks. Thus, if he eats or drinks after the break of dawn, his Sawm (Fast) will be invalid and he will have to make up for that day. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall.﴿

Q: Is it obligatory to stop eating the predawn meal once the Adhan (call to Prayer)

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of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer is announced? Or, is it permissible for us to eat and drink till the end of the Adhan?

A: If the Mu'dhin (caller to Prayer) is known to announce only the Adhan of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer at that time, it will be obligatory to abstain from eating and drinking as well as all other invalidators of Sawm (Fast) once the Adhan starts. However, if Adhan (call to Prayer) starts according to the conjecture of calendars, it will be unobjectionable to eat and drink at the time of the Adhan (caller to Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said in this regard: ﴾Actually, Bilal pronounces Adhan at night, so keep on eating and drinking (Suhur) till Ibn Umm Maktum pronounces Adhan. ﴿ The narrator said at the end of the Hadith: Ibn Umm Maktum was a blind man who did not call the Adhan until someone said to him: "The morning has come! The morning has come"! (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Anyway, it is more precautionary for a believer to be keen to finish eating the predawn meal before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and thus act in accordance with the Hadith that reads: ﴾Leave what causes you doubt and turn to what does not cause you doubt.﴿ To the same effect, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾So he who guards himself against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless...﴿ Nevertheless, if the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) is known

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to pronounce the Adhan at night to make people alarmed that the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer is eminent, as Bilal would do, it will be unobjectionable to eat and drink till the Mu'adhin who proclaims Adhan marking the break of dawn announce the Adhan in order to act in accordance with the mentioned above Hadith.

It is obligatory on believers to abstain from all invalidators of Sawm once the break of dawn is certain

Q: What is the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) ruling on the Sawm of someone who heard the Adhan for Fajr (Dawn) Prayer but continued eating and drinking?

A: What a believer must do is to abstain from invalidators of Sawm (Fast), i.e. eating and drinking. etc., when it becomes clear to him that dawn has broken when the Sawm (Fast) is obligatory, such as Ramadan and Sawm in fulfillment of vows or Kaffarahs (expiations). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴿and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)﴾ (Surah Al-Baqarah.)

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Thus, if one hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) knowing that it is for Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, one must stop all invalidators of Sawm (Fast). If the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) announces the Adhan before dawn breaks, one will not have to abstain from all invalidators and it will be permissible for him to eat and drink until he becomes sure that dawn has broken.

If one does not know whether the Mu'adhin announces the Adhan before or after dawn, it will be better and more precautionary to abstain from all invalidators of Sawm (Fast) once the Adhan is pronounced and it will not matter if he drinks or eats something during the Adhan because he does not know whether the dawn has broken or not.

It is well known that those who live in cities where there are electrical lights cannot know whether dawn has broken at the time when it breaks. However, it will be more precautionary for them to act in accordance with the Adhan and calendars defining the time of dawn, in hour and minute, and thus act in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿Leave what causes you doubt and turn to what does not cause you doubt.﴾ In the same vein, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿So he who guards himself against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless...﴾ May Allah grant us success!

Q: I intended to observe Sawm (Fast) on Monday voluntarily. However, I got up and drank water after the Adhan (call to Prayer) of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer had been announced. May I continue fasting, and will I be rewarded for doing so? Should one who observes voluntary Sawm (Fast) and eats or drinks after Adhan

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continue fasting on that day? Please benefit me. May Allah reward you well!

A: It is obligatory for a person who is observing obligatory Sawm (Fast) to abstain from eating, drinking and all that invalidates Sawm (Fast) after the certain break of dawn or on hearing the Adhan of a Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) who usually announces Adhan at the break of dawn or at the time of dawn as defined by calendars. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Actually, Bilal pronounces Adhan at night, so keep on eating and drinking (Suhur) till Ibn Ibn Umm Maktum pronounces Adhan. ﴿ Ibn Umm Maktum was a blind man who did not call the Adhan until someone said to him: "The morning has come! The morning has come!" (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.) If someone eats, drinks or does anything that invalidates Sawm (Fast) thereafter, his Sawm will be invalid. As for voluntary Fast, a person may not continue fasting unless he has abstained from eating, drinking and other invalidators of Sawm since the break of dawn as in the case of obligatory Sawm (Fast). If such a person eats, drinks or does anything

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that invalidates Sawm after the break of dawn or after the Adhan marking the break of dawn, he will not be observing Sawm. However, voluntary Sawm differs from obligatory Sawm in that the person observing voluntary Sawm may start fasting at midday if he has not done anything that invalidates Sawm since the break of dawn. Such a person will be given the reward of Sawm once he intends fasting. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said in this regard: ﴾One day the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) entered upon us and said: Have you anything (to eat)? We said, 'Messenger of Allah, there is nothing with us.' Thereupon he said: I am then observing Sawm. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to us on another day and we said: Hais (a compound of dates and clarified butter) was given to us as a present. He said: Bring it as I woke up in the morning observing Sawm.' And he ate.﴿ (Related by Muslim) Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) May Allah grant us success!

95- Ruling on breaking Sawm before sunset in overcast weather

Q: The weather was overcast when the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) announced Adhan (call to Prayer) which caused people to break their Sawm (Fasting). But after breaking the Sawm it turned out that the sun had not yet set.

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What is the ruling on Sawm under such circumstances?

A: The person to whom that happened should refrain from eating and drinking until the sun sets and has to make up for that day. This is the opinion of Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars). However, the person is not sinful if they broke their Sawm after doing their best to investigate whether or not the sun had set. The same applies to a person who did not observe Sawm early on the thirtieth day of Sha'ban and then later found out during the day that Ramadan had begun. In such a case, one should refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and should make up for that day. This is according to the Jumhur and they will not be sinful, because they did not know that it was Ramadan when they ate and drank. Actually, ignorance exempted them from being sinful. But they must make up for that day.

Q: Allah (Exalted be He) says: (and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)) **What is the ruling on continuing to eat Suhur (predawn meal) and drink water at the time of the Adhan (Call to Prayer), during the Adhan (of Fajr) or fifteen minutes thereafter?**

A: If the person who does so knows that the Adhan was announced before the break of dawn, he will not have to make up for that day. If he knows that the Adhan has been announced after the break of dawn, he will have to make up for that day. If he does not know whether eating and drinking was after or before

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the break of dawn, he will not have to make it up, for the basic principle in this regard is assuming that it is still night. However, a believer should be more cautious regarding his Sawm (Fast) and abstain from anything that invalidates Sawm (Fast) on hearing the Adhan (call to Prayer) unless he knows that the Adhan is usually announced before the break of dawn. Moreover, it is more precautionary for a person who eats or drinks after the Adhan to make up for that day unless he knows that the Adhan is usually announced before the break of dawn. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on doing something that invalidates Sawm (Fast) thinking that the sun has already set or that dawn has not yet broken

Q: What is the ruling on a person observing Sawm (Fast) who eats, drinks or has sexual intercourse thinking that the sun has already set or that dawn has not yet broken?

A: The sound opinion is that such a person has to make up for that day and is liable to the Kaffarah (expiation) of Zhihar (a man likening his wife to an unmarriageable relative) in the case of sexual intercourse. This was viewed by the majority of Muslim scholars in order to block the means leading to negligence and to be more cautious regarding Sawm (Fast).

Q: What is the ruling on the Sawm (Fast) of a person who eats and drinks doubting whether dawn has broken or the sun has set? Please benefit us. May Allah reward you well!

A: The person who eats or drinks doubting whether dawn has broken is not liable to do anything

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and his Sawm (Fast) is valid unless it turns out later that he ate and drank after the break of dawn. Actually, the basic principle in this regard is assuming that night remains. However, it is recommended for a Muslim to have Suhur (pre-dawn meal before the Fast) before the time of doubt in order to stand on firm grounds regarding his religion and the perfection of his Sawm (Fast). As for one who eats or drinks doubting whether the sun has set, he is mistaken and has to make up for that day, for the basic principle in this regard is assuming that the day remains. Moreover, a Muslim may not break his Sawm (Fast) unless he is certain that the sun has already or is most likely set. May Allah grant us success!

Q: One day in Ramadan, I intended to observe Sawm (Fast) at night. Later, I slept and got up to hear the radio program preceding the Adhan (call to Prayer) which caused me think that the Adhan of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer had not yet been announced. Therefore, I drank some water. However, it turned out later that the Fajr Adhan had been announced. Is my Sawm invalid in this case?

A: Yes, you have to make up for that day as you ate intentionally, not out of forgetfulness, after the break of dawn.

The ruling on one who forgetfully approaches any of the things that break the Sawm (Fast)

Q: What is the ruling on a person who eats or drinks during the daytime in Ramadan out of forgetfulness?

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A: There is no harm on him and his Sawm (Fast) is still valid, because Allah (Exalted be He) says at the end of Surah Al-Baqarah: ﴾Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error﴿ Also, it was narrated that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said that Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾I did.﴿ Moreover, it is authentically reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If anyone forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, he should complete his Fast, for it was Allah Who fed him and gave him drink.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

98- How should people whose day is very long observe and break Sawm (Fast)?

Q: What should those people whose day is twenty-one hours long do? Should they work out the time to fast? Similarly, what should those whose day is very short and those whose day lasts for six months and their night lasts for six months do? How should they offer Salah, and how should they observe Sawm?

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A: Those whose night and day add up to twenty four hours should fast that day, whether it is short or long, and that is acceptable from them, Praise be to Allah, even if the day is short. But those for whom the night or day is longer than that, such as six months, should work out the time for Sawm (Fast) and Salah (Prayer), as the Prophet (peace be uon him) enjoined what should be done on the day of Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist) which will be like a year, and his day which will be like a month, or like a week. The times for Salah (Prayer) should be worked out.

The Council of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom examined this matter and issued a statement No. 61, dated 12/4/1398 A.H. which states:

May Allah grant us success, and may Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

The Council of Senior Scholars, in its twelfth round, held in Riyadh on the early days of Rabi` Al-Akhir, 1398 A.H, has reviewed the letter sent by His Excellency the General Secretary of the Muslim World League in Makkah No. 555, dated 16/1/1398 A.H. It contains what is mentioned in the letter of the Chairman of the Islamic Societies in the city of Malu, Sweden. It says that owing to the geographical location of the Scandinavian countries, the day is very long during the summer and very short during the winter. Similarly, the sun never sets

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in the summer in the north and the opposite happens in winter. The Muslims there are asking how they should perform Salah (Prayer) and fast during Ramadan. His Excellency hopes that you would issue a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) in this regard to inform them.

The Council has also reviewed what the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' prepared and the other views related from the scholars in this regard. Having looked into and discussed the query, the Council has decided the following:

Firstly: Whoever lives in a land where the people can distinguish night from day by the rising of dawn and the setting of the sun, but their day is very long during the summer and very short during the winter, are obliged to offer the five daily prayers at the times that are known in Shari`ah (Islamic law), because of the general meaning of the Ayahs (Qur'anic verse) in which Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Perform As-Salât (Iqamât-as-Salât) from mid-day till the darkness of the night (i.e. the Zuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib and 'Ishâ' prayers), and recite the Qur'ân in the early dawn (i.e. the morning prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur'ân in the early dawn is ever witnessed (attended by the angels in charge of mankind of the day and the night).﴿ And ﴾Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) is enjoined on the

believers at fixed hours.》

It was authentically reported on the authority of Buraydah (may Allah be pleased with him) that a man asked about the times of Salah (Prayer) where the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him: 《Pray with us for these two (days)." When the sun disappeared (beyond the meridian), he ordered Bilal to call the Adhan (call to prayer), then he ordered him to pronounce the Iqamah (call to start the prayer) for the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer. He ordered him to call the Iqamah for the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer when the sun was still high, white, and clear. Then he ordered him to call the Iqamah for the Maghrib Prayer when the sun had set. Then he ordered him to call the Iqamah for the `Isha' Prayer

when the twilight had disappeared. Then he ordered him to call the Iqamah for the Fajr Prayer when the dawn had appeared. On the second day, he (peace be upon him) told him (Bilal) to delay the Zhuhr Prayer until the extreme heat had passed and he delayed it for a long while. He prayed the `Asr Prayer when the sun was high, delaying it beyond the time he had previously prayed it. He prayed the Maghrib Prayer before the twilight had disappeared, and he prayed the `Isha' Prayer when one third of the night had passed; and he prayed the Fajr Prayer when it was bright. Then he (peace be upon him) said, 'Where is the person asking about the time of the Salah?' The man said, 'Here I am, O Messenger of Allah!' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'The times of your Salah are between what you have seen.》 (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is also narrated from `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 《The time for Zhuhr is when the sun passes its zenith and the shadow of a man is equal in length to

him, so long as `Asr has not come. The time of `Asr is as long as the sun has not turned yellow. The time for Maghrib is as long as the twilight has not yet disappeared. The time for `Isha' is until halfway through the night. The time for Fajr is from dawn, as long as the sun has not yet risen. When the sun rises, then refrain from praying, for it rises between the horns of Satan.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) There are other Hadiths which define in word and deed the times for the five daily Prayers, without making any distinction

between the length or shortness of daytime so long as the times of Salah (Prayer) can be determined by the signs explained by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

This is related to determining the times of Salah (Prayer). With regard to the times for Sawm (Fast) of Ramadan, those who are Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) must refrain from eating, drinking and everything else that breaks the Fast on every day of the month fromthe break of dawn till sunset in their country, so long as the day can be distinguished from the night in their country, and the total of day and night is twenty four hours. In this way, it will be permissible for them to eat, drink, have sexual intercourse, and the like, only during their night, even if it is short. The Islamic Shari`ah (law) Islam is universal and applies to all people in all lands. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall.) If a person is unable to fast the whole day because it is too long, or because he knows from signs or by experience or on the advice of a trustworthy, skilled doctor, or he thinks it most likely that Sawm (Fast) will cause him to die or to become severely ill, make his sickness worse or will slow down his recovery from sickness, then he should break his Fast, and make up for the missed days during any month when he can make them up. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) He

(Exalted be He) also says: (Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope.) And (and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship)

Secondly: The person who lives in a land where the sun does not set during the summer and the sun does not rise during the winter, or he lives in a land where the day lasts for sixth months and the night lasts for six months for example, should offer the five daily Prayers during each twenty four hours, and he should try to work out their times, based on the closest land to him where the times of the five daily Prayers are distinct from one another, because of what it says in the Hadith about Isra' (Night Journey) and Mi`raj (Ascension to Heaven), that Allah (Exalted be He) prescribed upon this Ummah (nation based upon one creed) fifty Prayers every day and night, then the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept asking his Lord to reduce it until He said: (O Muhammad, they are five prayers everyday and night. However, every prayer is doubled ten times, so they are fifty prayers (i.e. in reward).) It was narrated that Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man from among the people of Najd with disheveled hair came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and we could hear the sound of his voice but we could not understand what he was saying, until

he drew close to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) where we knew that he was asking about Islam. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾You have to offer prayers perfectly five times in a day and night (24 hours)." The man asked, "Is there any more (praying)?" Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) replied, "No, but if you want to offer supererogatory prayers (you can)...﴿

It was authentically reported on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: ﴾We were forbidden to ask the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about anything (useless), so we used to like it when an intelligent Bedouin would come and ask him a question in our hearing. A Bedouin once came and said, 'O Muhammad, your messenger came to us and said that you claim that Allah sent you.' He said, 'He spoke the truth.'" .... to his saying that the man said, "And your messenger claimed that we have to offer five prayers each day and night." He (the Prophet, peace be upon him) said, "He spoke the truth." The man said, "By the One Who sent you, has Allah enjoined that upon you?" He said, "Yes."....﴿

Furthermore, it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told his Companions about Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist) where they said: ﴾How long will he stay on earth? He said: "Forty days: a day like a year, a day like a month, a day like a week, and the rest of

the days like your days." We said: O Messenger of Allah, on that day which is like a year, will the prayers of one day be sufficient for us? He said: "No. Work out the time (for prayer).﴿ He did not regard that day that will be like a year as being a single day in which five Prayers would be sufficient. Rather he prescribed observing five daily Prayers every twenty-four hours, and he commanded them to space them out during the time based on the times on an ordinary day in their country. So the Muslims in the country asked about how to define the times for Salah (Prayer) based on the closest country to them in which night is distinct from day, and thus the times for the five daily Prayers may be known by their Shar`y (Islamically lawful) signs (in the closest country) in every twenty-four hour period.

Similarly, they have to observe the Sawm (Fast) of Ramadan, and they should work out the beginning and end of Ramadan, and the times to start and end the Fast every day, and the time of dawn and sunset every day, in the closest country to them where night is distinct from daytime and the total of night and daytime is twenty-four hours. This is because of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist) that we have quoted above, in which he told his Companions how to work out the times of Salah (Prayer). There is no difference in this case between Sawm (Fast) and Salah (Prayer).

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Council of Senior Scholars

Chapter on having sexual intercourse in the daytime of Ramadan

99- Kaffarah of having sexual intercourse during the daytime in Ramadan

Q: What is the ruling on a man who started to have sexual intercourse with his wife before the break of dawn in one of the days of Ramadan but the lovemaking continued until after the break of the dawn? Does the couple have to make any Kaffarah (expiation)? May Allah reward you well!

A: This couple has to make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and Kaffarah (expiation) of freeing a slave. However, in case that they are unable to free a slave, then they have to observe Sawm (Fast) for two successive months (sixty days) or, in case of inability to do so, they have to feed sixty Miskin (needy) people half a Sa` of the staple food of the country (about 1.5 kilo each). Besides, both the concerned husband and wife have to make up the Sawm (Fast) for the day that they have missed. May Allah set aright their conditions!

Q: A man had sexual intercourse with his wife during the daytime of Ramadan so he was told to feed sixty Miskin (needy) people. Does such feeding have to be in Makkah or it may be done anywhere else? Besides, does the wife of the man have to make a Kaffarah (expiation) as well?

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A: If the husband had intercourse with his wife during the daytime of Ramadan and the latter yielded, each of them has to make Kaffarah (expiation) of freeing a slave. However, if they are unable to free slaves, they have to observe Sawm (Fast) for two successive months or, if they are unable to do so, each of them has to feed sixty Miskin (needy) people half a Sa` of the staple food of the country. Moreover, they have to make up the Sawm for the day they have missed, make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), feel remorse for their sin and give it up. This is because having sexual intercourse during the daytime in Ramadan is a major Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) that has to be avoided.

Q: A man had sexual intercourse with his wife in the day time of Ramadan so he observed Sawm (Fast) for two consecutive months. The question is whether his wife has to make any Kaffarah (expiation)? May Allah reward you!

A: In the Name of Allah. Praise be to Allah. The same Kaffarah has to be made by the concerned wife if she yielded willingly, not forcefully to the desire of her husband to have intercourse. Moreover, if she is unable to observe Sawm for two consecutive months, she should feed sixty Miskin (needy) persons half a Sa` per each. However, if the husband in question beat his wife strongly and compelled her to respond to his sexual desire, she is not required to make any Kaffarah and only the husband is to be burdened with the sin.

100-

Ruling on a person who had sexual intercourse several times with his wife in the daytime of Ramadan while being ignorant of the prohibition to do so

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to the honorable brother. May Allah guide you to all goodness, amen!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

I received your letter in which you mentioned that you had sexual intercourse several times with your wife in the daytime of Ramadan while being ignorant of the prohibition to do so.

A: Undoubtedly, Allah (Glorified be He) forbids His servants to break their Sawm (Fast) in the daytime of Ramadan whether by eating, drinking, or having sexual intercourse. Allah (Exalted be He) obligates Kaffarah (expiation) on whoever had sexual intercourse in the daytime in Ramadan while being Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions), healthy, and resident. The Kaffarah is to free a slave or, in case of inability to do so, to observe Sawm for two consecutive months or, in case of inability to do so, to feed sixty Miskin (needy) people half

a Sa` of the staple food of the country per each. However, Muslim scholars differ regarding the ruling on the resident and healthy Mukallaf who had sexual intercourse with his wife in the daytime of Ramadan while being ignorant of the prohibition to do so. Some hold the view that such a person has to make the same Kaffarah, as he was careless enough not to enquire beforehand about the ruling and try to obtain knowledge of his Din (religion). Some other scholars state that the concerned person does not have to make any Kaffarah as he was ignorant of the ruling. Thus, you may know now that to be on the safe side, you have to make the Kaffarah as you were heedless and you had not enquired about the ruling before you indulged in sexual intercourse. However, in case of your inability to free a slave or fast two consecutive months, it is sufficient that you feed sixty Miskin (needy) people for each day of Ramadan in which you had sexual intercourse. Thus, if you had sexual intercourse two days in Ramadan, you have to make two Kaffarahs (expiations). Likewise, if you had sexual intercourse three days in Ramadan, you have to make three Kaffarahs and so on. On the other hand, one Kaffarah only is sufficient for whatever several intercourse you had in one day in Ramadan. This is better for you and that you are in the safe side, discharge your responsibility, avoid differences of scholars, and compensate for the days you missed. Moreover, if you do not know exactly the number of days when you had sexual intercourse; be on the safe side by considering the larger number. For example, if you doubt whether they were three or four days, regard them as four and so on. Nevertheless, it is only Wajib (obligatory) on you to make Kaffarah for the number of days about which you are sure. May Allah guide us and you to all that pleases Him and relieve us of all

burdens! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

101-

Ruling on whoever forces his wife to have sexual intercourse with him during the daytime of Ramadan

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to the honorable brother A.M. May Allah grant him success, amen!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

I received your letter dated 24/04/1395 A.H. in which you mentioned that you compelled your wife to have sexual intercourse with you during the daytime of Ramadan and that you doubted whether you did so on one day only or on two different days. You also said that you can neither free slaves nor observe Sawm (of two consecutive months).

A: If the reality is exactly as you mentioned, you have to make a Kaffarah (expiation) of feeding sixty Miskin (needy) people half a Sa` (1.5 kilo) of the stable food of the country; whether in the form of lunch or dinner. On the other hand, you do not have to make any Kaffarah for the day that you are not sure whether you had sexual intercourse or not. This is because the original case is being discharged of such responsibility. Nevertheless, you may make Kaffarah for that doubtful day only to be on the safe side. In addition, your wife does not have to make any Kaffarah,

because you forced her to have sexual intercourse with you. It is worth mentioning that it is Wajib (obligatory) on you to make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) for this abominable sin and to make up for the day of Ramadan that you missed. Finally, I ask Allah to forgive me, you, and all Muslims. Verily, Allah (Exalted be He) is the Best One to be asked. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

President of Islamic University in Madinah

Q: A husband forced his seven-month pregnant wife to have sexual intercourse with him during daylight hours in Ramadan. This took place some years ago; what is the Kaffarah (expiation) that they must make?

A: This husband and wife must offer Tawbah (repentance to Allah), make up for the day of Ramadan that they missed, and make a Kaffarah. Their Kaffarah is that each one must free a believing bondsman or, in case of their inability to do so, to observe Sawm (Fast) for two consecutive months (sixty days) or, in case of their inability to do so, to feed sixty Miskin (needy) persons; each of them takes half a Sa` (about 1.5 kilo) of the staple food of the country. Finally, if the wife was forced i.e. unable to prevent her husband from having such sexual intercourse with her, she does not have to make any Kaffarah as a compelled person is not held accountable for their actions.

102- Ruling on a traveler having sexual intercourse with his wife during the daytime of Ramadan

Q: What is the ruling on whoever has sexual intercourse with his wife during the daytime of Ramadan while he is observing Sawm (Fast)? Is it permissible for a traveler who breaks his Sawm to have sexual intercourse with his wife?

A: It is Wajib (obligatory) on whomever has sexual intercourse during the day of Ramadan while observing Sawm to make Kaffarah (expiation) like that required for Zhihar (a man treating his wife as an unmarriageable relative). In addition, such a person must make up for the missed day of Ramadan and make Tawbah (repentance to Allah)

of what he had done. However, one for whom it is permissible to break Sawm due to travel or illness need not make any Kaffarah and is not blamed for having sexual intercourse during that day. Nevertheless, they must make up for the day of Ramadan that they missed. This is because one who is ill or on a journey is permitted to break Sawm either by having sexual intercourse or by eating, drinking, etc. Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.﴿ This ruling is also applied to wives; if she is fasting an obligatory fasting, she should make up for the missed days and offer expiation and if she is traveling or too sick to fast, no expiation is required.

103- Ruling on using tricks to escape Kaffarah necessitated by having sexual intercourse during the daylight of Ramadan

Q: Brother `A.S.M from Al-Dammam sent the following question to us: I was in a gathering with some brothers where we discussed the matter of Sawm (Fast) and the invalidators of it. One brother mentioned that he heard that if a man cannot control himself from having sexual intercourse with his wife during the daytime of Ramadan and thus breaks his Sawm by eating or drinking first, he will not have to make the Kaffarah (expiation) of breaking one's Sawm by having sexual intercourse during the daytime in Ramadan. Is this correct? Please, advise.

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A: What you have mentioned in the question is false. Both healthy and resident Muslim males and females must beware of having sexual intercourse during the daytime of Ramadan. However, husbands and wives who are traveling or ill and cannot observe Sawm may have sexual intercourse with each other. May Allah grant you success!

104-

Ruling on having sexual intercourse with his wife while she was making up for her Sawm

Q: Brother `A.M.S. from Cairo sent the following question to us: A husband came back home after a long period of travel. Though his wife was making up for the Sawm (Fast) of one of the days of Ramadan that she missed, he could not control his desire and had a sexual intercourse with her against her will. Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: This man must make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) feeling remorse for what he did and determine not to commit the same sin again out of exalting Allah (Glorified be He) and fearing of His punishment.

If the wife in question was forced into having sexual intercourse, she does not have to make any Kaffarah (expiation) and her Sawm is considered valid. However, if she was lenient with her husband, she has to make up for that day, make Tawbah, and no Kaffarah is required to be made by her. May Allah grant us success!

Recommended and reprehensible acts of Sawm

105- Ruling on swallowing one's saliva while observing Sawm

Q: What is the ruling on swallowing one's saliva while observing Sawm (Fast)?

A: This is permissible according to the Ijma` (consensus) of Muslim scholars, because of the extreme difficulty of avoiding swallowing one's saliva. However, a person who is observing Sawm has to emit phlegm once it reaches the mouth. In other words, it is impermissible to swallow expectoration while observing Sawm as. Unlike saliva, people normally can avoid swallowing that. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling on swallowing one's saliva while fasting?

A: Saliva does not affect fasting, because it is part of the mouth's natural moisture. So, there is no harm if it is swallowed or spit. As for sputum or phlegm ejected from the mouth or nose and that which may be ejected the chest and other times from the head, it must be spit out and should not be swallowed.

As for regular saliva, there is no harm in swallowing it and it does not invalidate one's fasting.

106. kissing and touching without intercourse during Sawm are Makruh (reprehensible) if they arouse sexual desire

Q: Caressing between a man and his wife during the daytime in Ramadan, led to his sitting between her legs and hugging and kissing her, and resulted in the secretion of Madhy (thin white viscid fluid secreted due to sexual thoughts or desire), although there was no penetration. This happened on six or seven days. The question is whether the Sawm (Fasting) is valid.

A: There is a difference of opinion among the scholars on this issue. Some of them say that emission of Madhy invalidates the Sawm, while others say that it does not. The most correct opinion - In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) - is that the Sawm is valid and neither of you have to make up for it. However, a Mu'min (believer) should be cautious about actions that lead to the secretion of Madhy, such as hugging and kissing. It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that ﴾He (peace be upon him) used to kiss (his wife) while observing Sawm, and used to touch without intercourse while observing Sawm. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "But he was the ablest of you to control his desire."﴿ It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that ﴾Two people asked him about kissing their wives while observing Sawm. He forbade one of them and gave permission to the other. We saw that the one who was given permission was

an old man, and the one he forbade was a young man.﴿

The scholars have deduced from this that kissing and touching without intercourse are Makruh for young married men and their like whose desires will be aroused by this and it is feared that they might commit that which is Haram (prohibited). As for people safely beyond that fear, it is not Makruh. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Is the Sawm (fast) considered invalid when a man kisses or fondles his wife during daylight hours in Ramadan? Please advise us, may Allah benefit you!

A: It is permissible for a man to kiss and fondle his wife, without having sexual intercourse, while he is fasting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to kiss and fondle his wives while he was fasting. However, if a person fears committing anything which Allah has prohibited because he is quickly aroused, it is Makruh (reprehensible) to do so. According to the Jumhur (majority of scholars), if Maniy (sperm) is emitted, a person should not eat or drink for the rest of the day. He should make up for this day, but he does not have to pay Kaffarah (expiation). However, Madhy (thin white viscid fluid secreted due to sexual thoughts or desire) does not invalidate the fast; according to the soundest of the two opinions of scholars and the basic principle is that the fast remains valid. That is because it is too difficult to be avoided. May Allah grant us success!

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107-

The ruling on watching movies, television and playing cards during the daytime in Ramadan

Q: Some Muslims spend most of the day in Ramadan watching movies, soap operas, videos, television, and playing cards. What is the ruling on this?

A: Muslims, whether fasting or not, should fear Allah with regard to what they do or do not do at all times. They should avoid forbidden matters such as watching obscene movies which depict things that Allah has prohibited including naked and semi-naked pictures. These reprehensible programs shown on television go against the laws of Allah like images, singing, musical instruments and misleading ideas.

Every Muslim, whether fasting or not, should avoid acts like playing cards and other kinds of entertainment that involves witnessing evil and committing sins, for the result will be hardening and impairing the heart, making light of Allah's Laws,

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neglecting the obligatory acts such as praying in congregation, and committing misdeeds. Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (i.e. music, singing, etc.) to mislead (men) from the Path of Allâh without knowledge, and takes it (the Path of Allâh, or the Verses of the Qur'ân) by way of mockery. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell-fire).﴿ ﴾And when Our Verses (of the Qur'ân) are recited to such a one, he turns away in pride, as if he heard them not - as if there were deafness in his ear. So announce to him a painful torment.﴿ In Surah Al-Furqaan, Allah describes the servants of the Most Merciful: ﴾And those who do not bear witness to falsehood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity.﴿

Falsehood includes all types of evil. The phrase "do not bear witness" means that they are absent from places where these things take place. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Verily, among my Ummah (nation) there will be people who will deem as lawful Zina (premarital sex and/or adultery), silk, Khamr (intoxicant) and musical instruments﴿ (Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih as a Hadith Mu`allaq (a Hadith missing link in the chain of narration, reported directly from the Prophet) but he reported it in the affirmative form of transmission. Zina includes different kinds of illegal sexual relations and the musical instruments refer to both singing and musical instruments. Allah has forbidden for Muslims all means that lead to prohibited things. Undoubtedly, watching movies showing nudity and other reprehensible television programs are among the ways leading to prohibited things or to tolerating them without denouncing these matters. Allah is the One Whose help is sought.

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108- What is the ruling on the fasting person who sleeps all day and stays awake all night?

Q: Dear Shaykh, some people remain awake until dawn then sleep after performing the Fajr (Dawn) Salah until the time of Zhuhr (noon) Prayer. They perform Zhuhr and then sleep again until `Asr. They do the same until the time of breakfast. What is the Islamic ruling regarding this behavior?

A: There is no harm to sleep all day and night so long as no sin results from this such as missing an obligatory matter or committing a prohibited act. A Muslim, whether he is fasting or not, should not remain awake all night. He should retire early after performing the voluntary night prayer in order to wake up for Suhur (Pre-dawn meal) if it is Ramadan. Suhur is a confirmed Sunnah which entails taking a meal before dawn. The Prophet's stated: (Eat Suhur (predawn meal). Surely, there is a blessing in Suhur.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says:

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(The difference between our fasting and that of the people of the Book is Suhur (eating shortly before dawn).) Related by Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths).

It is obligatory on the fasting person and others to perform the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers in congregation and beware of things which may prevent them from fulfilling these duties, such as sleeping and the like. It is obligatory upon fasting or non-fasting persons to perform all the obligatory duties in their prescribed times and not be distracted by sleep or other worldly matters. It is also obligatory upon a person to seek lawful means of sustenance that he and his dependents need. So, a person should not waste his time with other things such as sleeping, etc.

In conclusion, my advice to all people; fasting and non-fasting, is to fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) in all cases, perform all duties and obligations in their due times in a manner which pleases Allah and beware of all things that detract from his duties such as sleep or other lawful matters. In case a person is distracted by something unlawful, the sin will be doubled and the crime will be more grievous. May Allah improve the condition of all Muslims, make them understand their religion, make them be firm on the truth and rectify the condition of their leaders, for He is Most Gracious, Most Benevolent

Ghibah (backbiting), Namimah (tale-bearing), cursing and other sins harm one's fasting and decrease one's reward

Q: During Ramadan, does backbiting render one's fast invalid?

A: Ghibah (backbiting) does not render one's fasting invalid. Mentioning someone in a way that s/he hates is a sin because Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?﴿ The same is equally applied to Namimah (tale-bearing), cursing, swearing, and lying. All this does not break one's fast, but they are sins which one should avoid, whether during fasting or not. They harm one's fasting and decrease one's reward because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾"Whoever does not give up false statements (i.e. telling lies), and evil deeds, and speaking bad words to others, Allah is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink."﴿ Narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾Fasting is a shield or protection from the fire and from committing sins. If one of you is fasting, he should avoid sexual relation with his wife, quarreling, and if somebody should fight or quarrel with him, he should say, 'I am fasting.'﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) There are many Hadiths in this regard.

Suhur is not a condition for the validity of the fast

Q: If a person sleeps till after dawn without having Suhur (the predawn meal) during Ramadan while his intention was to have Suhur (the predawn meal), is his fasting valid or not?

A: His fasting is valid because Suhur is not a prerequisite for fasting to be valid; rather it is Mustahab (desirable). The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Eat Suhur. Surely, there is a blessing in Suhur.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Ruling on the one having Suhur in one's country and Iftar in another country

Q: Brother B.H.Q. from Riyadh says: What is the ruling on having Suhur (predawn meal) in one's country and Iftar in another country. This happened to me last year when I had Suhur (predawn meal) in my country during Ramadan and on the same day I reached Riyadh to have Iftar with the people of Riyadh, knowing that there is an hour

time difference between Riyadh and my country. Am I obliged to make up for this day or not?

A: There is no harm in this, because he is bound by the ruling of both the country wherein he had Suhur (predawn meal) and that wherein he broke his fast. There is no blame on him regarding the difference between the two countries in the length and shortness of the day, as well as the advancement and delay of sunset.

Do not break the fast until the sun sets while you are on board an aircraft

Q: The plane will take off - by the will of Allah - from Riyadh in Ramadan one hour before the Adhan of Maghrib (sunset) Prayer. The Adhan (call to Prayer) of Maghrib will be announced while we are in the fly zone over Saudi Arabia. Shall we break the fast while we see the sun or continue fasting until we arrive home or break the fast as soon as we hear the Adhan of Saudi Arabia?

A: When the plane takes off from Riyadh, for example, before sunset heading west, you are still fasting until the sun sets while you are in the air or land in a country where the sun has already set.

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The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: (When night falls from this side and the day vanishes from this side and the sun sets, then the fasting person should break his fast.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

113- Donating Money for Iftar

Q: Um Hamid from Al-Hawtah writes: Some charitable institutions collect donations to feed the poor Muslims during Ramadan. Shall the one who donates to these institutions have the same reward of a fasting person or must one give the food himself?

A: When a Muslim donates to feed fasting people, he shall be rewarded whether he does it personally or through other trustworthy individuals or established organizations.

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114- The merit of reading the entire Qur'an in Ramadan

Q: Does the fact that Jibril (peace be upon him) reviewed the entire Qur'an with the Prophet (peace be upon him) during Ramadan mean that it is preferable to make Khatmah (one complete reading of the Qur'an) during Ramadan?

A: This indicates that it is recommended for a believer to study the Qur'an with someone who can benefit him/her. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) reviewed it with Jibril in order to benefit, for Jibril was sent by Allah and was the ambassador between Him and the Messengers. This does not mean that Jibril is better than the Prophet (peace be upon him) but he was the messenger of Allah to him (peace be upon him). Allah sent Jibril to the Prophet (peace be upon him) so that he could teach him (peace be upon him) how to recite the Qur'an and clarify its meanings. So, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) benefited from Jibril in this respect

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and it does not mean that Jibril is superior to him (peace be upon him). Rather, he (peace be upon him) is the best of mankind and superior to the angels. This brought a great deal of benefit to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to the Ummah (nation) because it was the study of what was revealed by Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).

We can also conclude that studying at night is better than during the daytime, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) reviewed Qur'an with Jibril at night. It is known that the heart is more attentive and can benefit more at night than during the daytime.

Another benefit is the fact that studying is prescribed and it is a good deed, in or outside of Ramadan, because it brings benefit to both parties. If there are more than two people, that is fine because each one can benefit from his brother and encourage him to recite. For a person may not be inclined to recite if he is sitting alone, but if he has someone else there to study with him, or other companions, that can be more encouraging. There is also the great benefit that all of them will find in discussing and studying things that they did not understand. All of this entails a great deal of good.

It may also be understood from this that reciting the entire Qur'an by the Imam in the Congregational Prayer in Ramadan is a way of reviewing it, because there is a benefit from listening to the entire Qur'an. Hence, Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful with him)

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recommended that the Imam makes Khatmah in Tarawih (supererogatory Night Prayer in Ramadan). This was the practice of the Salaf for they loved to hear the Qur'an recited in its entirety. However, this should not cause us to hasten in reciting the Qur'an; rather we should be in a state of Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and tranquility; paying attention is more important than thinking of completing the Qur'an.

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The ruling on fasting Ramadan

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115- The Islamic ruling on fasting Ramadan in a non-Muslim country

Q: A person regularly fasts the month of Ramadan in non-Muslim countries. Is he sinful?

A: A Muslim receives Ramadan joyfully and is pleased to spend it in Muslim countries because of the common aspects found only in Muslim countries that one will not find in other places, such as large numbers of worshippers and those who compete in doing acts of obedience to Allah. Undoubtedly, this adds to ones enthusiasm, vigor, and desire for doing good deeds.

Conversely, those in non-Muslim countries may not benefit fully due to the shortage of their good deeds or due to committing sins. They may also become worse owing to being far away from righteous people and being surrounded by bad company facilitates committing sins. The person in question should fear Allah and strive to fast Ramadan in Muslim countries. However, if he does so for a legitimate reason such as calling to Allah,

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leading Muslims in prayer and other good deeds, he will be greatly reward; even more than being in a Muslim country. Allah will increase his reward for calling to Allah and teaching people useful knowledge, provided that he keeps himself far from evils. May Allah grant us success!

116- The ruling on one who abandons fasting out of negligence

Q: What is the ruling on a person who does not observe Sawm (fast) during Ramadan, but he does not deny its obligation? Does abandoning Sawm more than once out of negligence take a person out of Islam?

A: Whoever does not observe Sawm in Ramadan intentionally with no legal excuse, has committed one of the gravest major sins. However, according to the soundest opinions of scholars, such a person is not Kafir (disbeliever), but must repent to Allah (Glorified be He) and make up for the broken fast. There are many evidences which show that a person does not commit major Kufr (disbelief) by abandoning Sawm out of negligence unless he denies its obligation. If a person does not make up for the broken fast till the next Ramadan without a legal excuse, he must feed a Miskin (needy person) for every day he missed. Likewise, one who neglects paying Zakah or performing Hajj while being able and does not deny their obligation, is not a Kafir. He must pay Zakah due for the past years, perform Hajj, and offer sincere Tawbah (repentance). This is according to the general meaning of the legal proofs which show that whoever does not deny the obligation of Zakah and Hajj is not a disbeliever. This is understood from the Hadith of the person punished for not paying Zakah on the Day of Resurrection, he will then be admitted to Paradise or Hellfire.

117- The ruling on making up for abandoning fasting without a legal excuse

Q: What is the ruling on a Muslim who neglects observing Sawm (fast) with no legal reason for years, but he observes the other duties? Should he make up for the broken fast or pay Kaffarah (expiation)? How should he make up for the broken fast?

A: A Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) who does not fast Ramadan, has disobeyed Allah and His Messenger and committed one of the major sins. He must repent to Allah and make up for the broken fasts along with feeding a Miskin (needy person) for every day he missed, if he is able to do so. It is sufficient for one who cannot feed a Miskin to only make up for the broken fasts. However, one must repent. Sawm of Ramadan is a major obligation which Allah enjoined on Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that it is one on the five pillars of Islam.

If a person does not deny the obligation of Sawm of Ramadan and his case is referred to the rulers or the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (CPVPV), they should impose Ta`zir (discretionary punishment) on him.

A person who denies the obligation of fasting Ramadan is a Kafir and belies Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Muslim rulers should ask him to repent through the Shar`i (Islamic legal) courts. Thanks are due to Allah if he repents; otherwise he is to be executed for apostasy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("If anyone (a Muslim) changes their faith, he is to be executed.") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith)

However, there is no harm if one abandons Sawm due to travel or illness. Such a person should make up for the broken fast after recovery or returning from his journey. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) (Surah Al-Baqarah).May Allah grant us success!

Q: I am a Muslim man - all praise be to Allah! A long time ago, I used not to perform Sawm (Fasting) for the whole of Ramadan; I used to break my Sawm for some days, without an excuse. I now regret this, and I have made Tawbah (repentance to Allah), but I do not know the number of days of Sawm that I missed. What should I do now?

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A: You should estimate the number of days in which you did not observe Sawm and make up for them. You should also make Tawbah to Allah, regret what you did, and firmly resolve not to do it again.

You should also feed a needy person half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) for each day that you think you have abandoned fasting it. We ask Allah to grant you a sincere Tawbah, and forgive you and us!

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From 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to sister M. A. Q., may Allah grant her success!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I read the questions that you sent to me and the answer is as follows:

Q: A woman used to tend sheep when she was young. She started to observe Sawm in Ramadan two years after it had become obligatory on her to do so. But while in the desert when she became parched with thirst, she used to drink water.

A: She should make up for the days in which she broke her Sawm and feed a needy person half a Sa' of the staple food of the country for each day; this is to be done along with making up for the missed fasts, because she has delayed making up for them. The amount of food she should give is half a Sa' of the staple food of the country for each day, if she is able to do this. But if she is too poor to feed other people, she is only required to perform the Sawm. There is no prohibition against giving the entire required amount of food just to one needy person or more.

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Q: Five years ago, I broke four days of my Sawm (Fasting) in Ramadan, with no excuse other than tiredness. Is it obligatory on me to make up for those days? Do I have to pay a Kaffarah (expiation), and if so, what is it? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: You have to do three things:

First: Make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and regret your dereliction of duty and breaking the Sawm without a lawful excuse. You should also make Tawbah for delaying making up for those missed days of Sawm, as it is obligatory to make up for these days before the next Ramadan. You should make Tawbah for both breaking the Sawm without a lawful excuse and delaying making up for those days. You should actually make Tawbah for every sin you commit in general, by regretting the sin, abstaining from it, and sincerely determining not to do it again. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴿And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴾

Second: Along with Tawbah you should make up for those four days, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴾

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Anyone who breaks their Sawm, when they are neither ill nor traveling, must with greater reason make up for it and they should make Tawbah to Allah (Exalted be He) as well.

Third: You should feed a needy person half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) of dates, wheat, rice, or other staple food of your country, for each day you broke your Sawm. You can give it to several needy people or just one. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is the One in Whose Hands is to forgive and guide you, us, and all the Muslims.

118. Ruling on not observing Sawm in Ramadan due to ignorance of its obligation

Q: Ten years ago, I reached puberty, as its known signs showed up, but I did not observe Sawm (Fasting) in Ramadan during the first year of my puberty, although I did not have a lawful excuse. It was just due to my ignorance of its obligation at that time. Should I make up for it now and do I also have to offer a Kaffarah (expiation) too?

A: You should make up for the month (of Ramadan) in which you did not observe Sawm, along with

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performing Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah). You should also feed a needy person half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) of dates, rice, or other staple food of your country for every day not fasted, if you can do this. If you are poor and cannot afford this, nothing is required of you except to perform the Sawm.

Q: i did not observe Sawm (Fasting) for twelve years after it became obligatory on me, because i did not know the ruling on abandoning Sawm at that time. After this - all praise be to Allah - I have observed Sawm in Ramadan continually, without missing a day. What is the ruling in Islam on the period during which I did not observe Sawm? Do I have to fast all those days or just some of them, making up for the rest? Is there anything other than Sawm to make up for these missed days? My mother has the same problem, but the number of years she did not fast is different. She is old now, and her medical condition does not allow her to observe Sawm since a long time. Please advise us and may Allah bless you!

A: Both you and your mother should make up for the days that you did not perform Sawm and you have to perform Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), because you did wrong when you neglected that obligation and delayed it. It is obligatory on you to make Tawbah to Allah, regret what you did, ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) for forgiveness, and sincerely resolve not to do it again.

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In addition to making up for those missed days, you have to feed a needy person half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) of dates or wheat for every day not fasted, if you are able. If you are poor, you do not have to do this, but you have to perform the Sawm for the missed days. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ Since you were neither ill nor traveling, it is all the more obligatory on you to make up for those days. The same applies to your mother; she has to make up for those days after she recovers - even if she does not fast the missed days successively, by fasting on days and not fasting on others until she completely make up for the days of Sawm she missed. If she is so old that she cannot observe Sawm in Ramadan, she should feed a needy person half a Sa' of the staple food of her country for every day not fasted, and all praise be to Allah! But if she is still able to perform Sawm, she should do so. If she is now suffering from an illness that prevents her from performing Sawm, she can delay it until she recovers - In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) - and then she should perform Sawm along with feeding a needy person for every day, as you should. This food may be given to one needy person or more.

119- Days missed from previous Ramadan must be made up for before the next Ramadan

Q: If Ramadan comes and someone still has days of Sawm (Fasting) to make up for from the previous Ramadan, are

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they considered sinful for not having made up the days before the start of the next Ramadan? Do they have to make a Kaffarah (expiation) or not?

A: Everyone who has days to make up from previous Ramadan has to make up for those days before the next Ramadan. They may delay making up for them until Sha'ban, but if the next Ramadan comes and they still have not made up for those days, without an excuse, they are considered sinful for that. They should make up for these days later and also feed a needy person for each missed day. This was the Fatwa (legal opinion) given by a group of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet). The required amount of food is half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) of the staple food of your country to be given to some or just one needy person for every day not fasted. If you are excused for the delay by reason of illness or travel, you just have to make up for the Sawm; you do not have to feed needy people. This is according to the general rule in the Saying of Allah (Glorified be He): ﴾And whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm (fast) must be made up] from other days.﴿ Allah is the Grantor of success!

The ruling on delaying making up for missed days of fasting without an excuse

Q: Five years ago, I experienced a serious illness during Ramadan and therefore, I could not fast. Until now, I have not made up for this month that I missed. Is it permissible for me to make up for it during these days? Am I sinful for this delay? Please, advise!

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May Allah reward and safeguard you!

A: We urge you to repent to Allah (Exalted be He) for this long postponement. You were to make up for the days in which you did not fast before the next Ramadan of the year in which you failed to fast. Therefore, you must give half a Sa` for each day you missed (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) from the staple food of your area such as dates, rice, and the like to some poor people or to one poor person. May Allah accept your repentance and forgive you! He is the best One asked for help.

Q: I am fifty years old and I missed fifteen days of fasting after giving birth to one of my children 27 years ago, because I could not make up for them in the same year. Should I make up for the missed days now? Is there any sin on me? Please, advise!

A: You must repent to Allah (may He be Praised) for this delay and make up for these days along with feeding a Miskin (needy person) for each missed day half a Sa` from the staple food of the country in you live and that is approximately 1.5 kilos.

Q: Many years ago, I had my menstruation in Ramadan but until now I have not made up for the days in which I broke my Sawm (fast). I would like to make up for the missed days of Sawm but I do not remember the exact number of days missed. What should I do?

A: You should do three things:

First, perform Tawbah (repentance to Allah) for that delay, regret your past negligence and firmly resolve not to do it again. This is according to Allah's (Exalted be He) saying, ﴾And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴿ This delay is a sin and you should perform Tawbah for it.

Second, observe Sawm as soon as possible by estimating the number of missed days, as Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. You should estimate the number of days and make up for them. If you think they are ten, you should observe Sawm for ten days. If you think they are more or less, you should observe Sawm accordingly, according to Allah's (Exalted be He) saying, ﴾Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He)

also says, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

Third, feed a needy person for each day if you can afford it, even if it is only one person for all the days. However, if you are poor and cannot afford it, you have to observe Sawm and perform Tawbah only. The amount of food that should be given to the needy person is half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the foodstuff common in the country, which is equal to 1.5 kilograms.

121- The difference between delaying the making up for the missed days of Ramadan with/without a legal excuse

Q: What is the ruling of the Shari`ah (Islamic law) on one who delays making up for Ramadan till the next Ramadan with/without an excuse?

A: If the delay is for a Shar`i (Islamically lawful) excuse such as illness and other legal excuses, there is no harm. Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ He (Glorified be He) also states: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

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As for whoever delays it without an excuse, he disobeys Allah and must repent, make up for these days, and feed a poor person for each missed day half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple food common in the country, such as rice and the like. It is equal to 1.5 kilograms and should be given to some or at least of the poor before or after fasting. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Thirty five years ago, I gave birth to a baby girl in Ramadan and after two years, I gave birth to another girl baby. I fasted only ten days, given that I am an old and sick. What should I do?

A: When Allah grants you recovery, you must make up for the first Ramadan and then fast the next Ramadan along with feeding a poor person for each day, if you neglected making up for Ramadan despite having the ability to do so. In this case, you must feed a poor person for each missed day half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of dried dates, rice, or any type of food that is common in your country. It is to be given to the poor; one, two, or even a poor household. This is sufficient along with Sawm (fast) and Tawbah (repentance to Allah).

However, if the delay is due to illness and you did not neglect

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making up for the missed Ramadan, you have only to make up for it without having to feed, for you are excused. Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿

122- A group of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ruled that whoever delays making up for the missed days of Ramadan must feed the poor along with making up for these days

Q: Many years ago, I did not fast the entire month of Ramadan. I was in the hospital and physicians prevented me from observing Sawm (fast). Given that I was too ill to observe Sawm, I fed poor people to compensate for the whole month before the next Ramadan. Then, I fasted the months of Ramadan after that and also fasted 23 days to make up for the month I had not fasted, but I still have seven days to fast. Is feeding the poor which I did before sufficient or should I make up for the seven remaining days, given that my health does not occasionally

permit me to fast?

A: You have to make up for the seven days along with feeding a poor person for each day half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple food common in your country for delaying the making up for the Sawm of Ramadan till the next Ramadan passed. Allah (Glorified be He) states: (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) Also, a group of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ruled that whoever delays making up for the missed days of Ramadan must feed a poor person for each of these days along with making up for these days. May Allah grant us all success! Peace be upon you!

Q: What is the ruling on neglecting to make up for the missed days of Ramadan until the next one comes without an excuse? Is it sufficient to offer Tawbah (repentance to Allah) along with making up for these days or must one offer Kaffarah (expiation)?

A: One must repent to Allah (Glorified be He), feed a poor person for each day, and make up for it. The amount that should be given to the poor is half a Sa` (a Sa` = 2.172 Kg), according to the measure of the people of Madinah, of the common staple food in your country, such as dried dates, rice, etc. There is nothing due other than this Kaffarah, as a group of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

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including Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) gave this Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar). However, if the person is excused for being ill or traveling; or a woman is excused due to pregnancy or breastfeeding that makes it hard for her to observe Sawm, they need only to make up for the missed days.

The ruling on Kaffarah (expiation) for those who delay making up for missed days of fasting due of their incapability?

Dear Sheikh, `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz, may Allah protect you from all harm. Amen.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Hereby I send you these two questions hoping for Your Eminence to answer them. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Q: My wife broke her fast on some days of Ramadan. She became pregnant and until now she has not made up for these missed days. She will give birth next Ramdan - in sha' Allah - and is presently nursing a baby. What is the Islamic ruling on this? When should she make up for the missed days? Is there a Kaffarah due on her?

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

A: She must make up for the missed days of Ramdan when she is able to do so, even if it is done after the next Ramadan. There is no Kaffarah due in her case as the delay is due to her inability. But if she takes this matter lightly, she must repent, make up for these days,

and pay a Kaffarah which is feeding a needy person for each day half a Sa`; according to the Prophet's measure of a Sa` from the staple food of the country where you live from wheat, rice, etc. A Sa' equals approximately 1.5 kilos.

General Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz

There is no expiation for deferring making up for the missed days due to illness

Q: I fell ill and could not fast Ramadan till another Ramadan came. Would fast only be sufficient now or should I pay expiation as well? If this is all right, what is the Kaffarah?

A: In light of what you mentioned, if you deferred it out of sickness, it is sufficient to fast the missed days only and if you remained ill till the next Ramadan, fasting these days is sufficient for you and there is no blame on you. However, if you were neglectful and delayed making up for the days until the following Ramadan, you must do two things: Fast the days which you missed and feed the needy as expiation for every day half a Sa` of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which equals about 1.5 kg. from the staple food of your area such as dates, rice, wheat, etc. You may collect them and give them to the poor.

Q: Two years ago, my mother became seriously ill and had to take some medication. Her doctor advised her not to observe fasting, but she fasted without his knowledge. Her conditions worsened and then she discontinued

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fasting for twenty days. Now, she is better and feels that she is capable of fasting. She was told that she has to offer Kaffarah (expiation) and make Sawm (fasting), because she delayed Sawm. Is it permissible for her to pay the Kaffarah at once or pay it in part everyday? What is the amount of this Kaffarah, taking into consideration that my mother could make up for the missed days in the period when she was healthy? She observed the fasting of the whole month of last Ramadan. May Allah reward you and make you and us benefit from the Glorious Qur'an!

A: There is nothing due on your mother, except making up for the missed days if she can. It is not required of her to feed if the delay was due to sickness lasting to the next Ramadan. But if her delay was due to negligence, she must make up for the missed days and feed a needy person for each day half a Sa` from the regular food of the country in which she lives such as fresh dates, rice, etc. It is approximately 1.5 kilograms. It is enough to pay it all to one needy person. May Allah guide us all to understand Islam and be firm on the truth, for He is All-Hearing, Ever Near.

125- Sequence is not a condition for making up the missed days of fasting

Q: If a Muslim does not fast for two successive days in Ramadan for a legal excuse, how should he make up for them?

A: He should make up for them even if separated, because sequence is not obligatory. Allah (Exalted be He) states, (and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.) In this Ayah (Qur'anic Verse), Allah did not stipulate successive fasting and therefore if one does not fast for two or more successive days, it is mandatory on him to make up for them and it is not obligatory to fast consecutively but it is better to do so. Therefore, if one fasts the missed days but not in succession, there is no harm.

126- It is not obligatory on the patient to make up for the missed days of fasting until after recovering

Q: I became ill last Sha`ban and could not fast in Ramadan. I still suffer from this illness. When I wanted to make up for this month, I fasted five days but could not continue due to my condition. Because I required medication throughout the day, the doctor treating me

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advised me not to fast. So I Hope Your Eminence will give the ruling on this, may Allah reward you as you know that next Ramadan is coming soon.

A : As long as you are ill, you do not have to make up for missed days until you recover, if Allah wills. The same goes to the coming Ramadan, in sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills); if fasting is hard for you, it will best not to fast and you should make up for the first and the second Ramadan after your recovery, in sha'a-Allah. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴿ May Allah grant us success!

Q: I am a sick women and I broke fast last Ramadan and could not make up for these missed days due to my illness. I cannot fast Ramadan this year as well, so what is the Kaffarah (expiation)?

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A: It is permissible for the sick to break fast if it is difficult for them. However, after recovery they must make up for the missed days. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ As for the questioner, there is no harm on you to break the fast during this month as long as your sickness lasts because breaking the fast is a concession from Allah to the sick and the traveler. Allah (Exalted be He) is pleased with those who take His concessions and dislikes them to commit sins. There is no Kaffarah on you but when you are cured, you must make up for these days. May Allah save you from all harm and expiate your sins!

127- Whoever has a chronic disease and is advised by Muslim doctors to break their fast is not required to make up for the missed days if they recover

Q: A man was afflicted with a chronic disease and the doctors told him that he should not fast at all but he went to some doctors in another country and was cured after five years by the permission of Allah. However, during these years he broke his fast for five months of Ramadan. What should he do after Allah cured him; should he make up for these months or not?

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A: If the doctors who advised him to avoid fasting were honest and well-versed in that disease and informed him that it is an incurable disease, then he is not required to make up for the missed days and feeding poor people is enough for him and he has to continue fasting in the future.

Ruling on breaking the fast that a person observes to make up for missed days of fasting

Q: Sister B.F.B.B. from Al-Jubayl, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia says:

I was fasting one day to make up for a missed fast but after Zhuhr prayer I felt hungry so I ate and drank deliberately; I did not forget and was not unaware. What is the ruling on this action that I did? May Allah safeguard you, dear Sheikh!

A: You have to complete the fast. It is not permissible to break the fast if it was an obligatory fast such as making up the missed days of Ramadan or a fast that you vowed to observe. You also have to repent from what you did. Whoever repents to Allah, Allah will accept his repentance.

129- Making up for the missed days of Ramadan on behalf of someone who abandoned Salah is not prescribed

Q: My mother died a while ago and she never fasted Ramadan

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and she did not offer prayer except in her last year and she intended to perform Hajj to the Holy House of Allah but she died before Hajj. Is it permissible for me to fast the month she did not fast knowing that before her death, she began to offer prayer? Is it permissible for me to perform Hajj on her behalf? Are there any ways or kinds of worship that I can do so that she will be granted their reward? Please, advise. May Allah reward you!

A: You do not have to make up the fasting that your mother missed when she abandoned prayer as abandoning prayer as an act of disbelief that renders deeds fruitless. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: ﴾That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of prayer. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever.﴿ Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) from Burayda ibn Al-Hasib (may Allah be pleased with him) with a good chain of narration and there are many legal indications to the same effect.

But if she missed any days which she did not fast after Allah guided her

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to offer prayer, you may make up for them as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ﴾If anyone dies in a state (that he had to complete) some days of fast, their heir must fast on their behalf.﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). If she did not fast and none of her relatives or others made up for them, you may feed one needy person half a Sa` (1 Sa` = 2.172 kg) of the staple food of the country such as dates, rice, or the like for each day she missed.

You may pray for her as much as possible and give alms for her sake so that Allah might benefit her with that but if you know that she did not do anything that takes her out of Islam before her death. You may also perform Hajj for her and if she was rich in her life, you have to use her money to perform Hajj on her behalf. May Allah guide you and assist you to do everything good!

All Praise is due to Allah. Peace and blessings be upon Allah's Messenger.

To his Eminence scholar Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn Baz, may Allah preserve you!

My brother died when he was 18 years old. He was lazy and neglectful in performing Salah (Prayer). Sometimes he would offer Salah and at other times he would abandon it. He deliberately did not fast for 15 days during Ramadan without a Shar`i excuse.

My question is: Is it permissible for me to perform fasting and pilgrimage on his behalf? Is it possible for me to ask forgiveness for him and give charity on his behalf? Please, answer me quickly because I am in dire need of this. May Allah benefit us through your knowledge!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you).

A: A: If the condition of your brother is as you mentioned i.e. laziness in offering Salah and neglecting it sometimes, then it is not permissible for you neither to perform Hajj nor to give charity on his behalf, nor supplicate to Allah for him because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾That which differentiates us from them (disbelievers and hypocrites) is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it

becomes a disbeliever.﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allâh's Forgiveness for the Mushrikûn (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), even though they be of kin﴿ May Allah grant you success and endow us and you with useful knowledge and working accordingly, for He is the Best One to be asked! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you).

Q: What is the opinion of our revered Shaykh regarding a person who deliberately neither offers Salah nor observes fasting. Yet after Allah granted him guidance and he returned to Allah and wept for his extravagance, he kept observing Salah and fasting and all other acts of worship. Is he to be commanded to make up for the Salah and fasting that he missed or do repentance? Will asking Allah's forgiveness be sufficient for him?

A: A person who abandons Salah and Sawm and then sincerely repents to Allah, is not obliged to make up for what he missed because abandoning Salah is a major Kufr that takes a person out of Islam even if a person abandons it without denying its obligation, according to the preponderant opinion of the two main views of the scholars on this issue. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven.﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Islam wipes out all that has gone before it (previous misdeeds).﴿ Repentance

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wipes out all that has gone before it (previous misdeeds). There are many proofs in this regard including Allah's (may He be Praised) saying: ﴾And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death).﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾O you who believe! Turn to Allâh with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise)﴿

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Whoever repents from sins is like a sinless person.﴿

A repentant should do many righteous deeds after his repentance. He should also frequently ask Allah (may He be Praised) to make him steadfast on the truth and to grant him a good end. May Allah grant us success!

130- An apostate is not asked to make up for missed obligations when he returns to Islam

Q: Should an apostate make up for the missed Salah (Prayer) and Sawm (Fasting) if he returns to Islam and repents to Allah?

A: If someone performs Tawbah, they do not have to make up for the missed acts of `Ibadah (worship), as Allah forgives them. If someone abandons Salah or does one of the things which nullifies Islam

and then repents to Allah, he will not be obliged to make up for the acts of worship that he missed. This is the soundest view because Islam erases the past actions and Tawbah terminates the past sins. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven.﴿ Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven. So Allah explains that He will forgive what a Kafir (disbeliever) did previously, if he accepts Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Islam and penitence wipe out all the previous misdeeds.﴿

Q: Is it permissible to fast on behalf of a deceased person, if he did not fast Ramadan in his life time though he paid Kaffarah (expiation) before his death?

A: His relatives may fast on his behalf if he was a Muslim offering his prayer as the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: (If anyone dies while he had to make up for some days missed of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast on his behalf.) Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. But if he did not fast out of inability, senility, or illness that is not expected to be cured, he will not have to fast and the food he fed the needy would be enough if he fed them for all the days he missed

but if he did not offer prayer, then it would not be accepted from a person to make up for these days as abandoning prayer deliberately is Kufr (disbelief) as viewed by

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scholars to be the correct opinion, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: (That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.) Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah with an authentic chain of narration from Buraydah ibn Al-Hasib (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said: (The peak of the matter is Islam; the pillar is Salah; and its topmost part is Jihad (Fighting/Struggling in the Cause of Allah).) Related by Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhy with an authentic chain of narration from Mu'adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.) Reported by Imam Muslim in his Sahih on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them). There are many Hadiths in this regard. May Allah guide all Muslims to what pleases Allah and assists them to do what Allah makes obligatory on them such as prayer and other things in the way that He likes. Truly, He is All-Hearer, Ever Near (to all things).

131- Ruling on making up for Prayer and Fasting missed due to sickness

Q: My mother used to observe prayers and fasting but she was afflicted with a strong disease that lasted for two years and she died after it. The disease caused her to abandon prayers and fasting during this time. What should I do for her; should I pay expiation or offer the missed days of fasting and perform prayers? Answer me, may Allah reward you the best!

A: Your mother died while she was ill and was not able to fast which means that you are not to fast the missed days nor feed people on her behalf but your mother committed a mistake in abandoning prayers. It was obligatory on her to offer prayers even if she is sick and should not have postponed it for it is incumbent on a sick person to offer prayer according to their conditions i.e. if they are able to stand during prayer, they should do; if they are unable to stand, they may offer prayer sitting; and if they could not do so, they are allowed to pray while lying down and in this case it is better to be on the right side. If they could not do any of this, they can offer it lying on their back. This is the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) told

one of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who complained of sickness. He said to him, ﴾Pray while standing and if you can not, pray while sitting and if you can not, then pray lying on your side, and if you can not even do that, then pray lying on your back.﴿ This is what is obligatory in this case on both the male and the female. Upon offering prayer, they should have the intention of offering prayer with all its pillars and obligations in their heart and say the supplication as much as they can. They say Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and after that say Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer), recite Al-Fatihah and some Ayahs (Verses) from the Qur'an as much as they can. Then, says Takbir (saying Allahu-Akbar "Allah is the Greatest") intending bowing down and say after that, "Subhana Rabbi-Al-`Azim i.e. Glory be to my Most-High Lord). Afterwards, they say, "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah" (Allah hears whoever praises Him) intending to rise from bowing and then say, (Rabbana wa laka Al-Hamd i.e. O our Lord! To You belongs all praise!) and other supplications. After that, they should say Takbir intending to prostrate and says, "Subhana Rabbia-Al-A`la) and then rise up saying Takbir and intending to sit between the two prostrations and say, "O Lord! Forgive me". Then, say Takbir intending the second prostration and so on this way using intention and speaking.

As for Salah, it is not prescribed to make up for it. However, you should supplicate to Allah for your mother and pray to Him to confer mercy and forgiveness upon her if she is observing Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) but if she used to supplicate to the dead and seek their help or supplicate to anyone other than Allah, you should not do so for these evil deeds are classified as major disbelief. May Allah grant us success!

132- It is permissible for the relatives of the dead to make up for the missed acts of worship of the dead

Dear Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, may Allah safeguard him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Could you kindly answer this question:

Q: A woman suffers from a psychological illness. Sometimes she gets sick and goes to the hospital and sometimes she recovers and leaves the hospital. She died while she had two months of Ramadan which she did not fast. What is the ruling on that?

Wa`alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!)

A: It is permissible for some of her relatives to observe fasting on her behalf, for the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: (If anyone dies while he had to make up for some days missed of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast on his behalf.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The close relative refers to the paternal or the maternal kindred. If there is no one to fast on her behalf, for everyday that she did not fast a needy person should be fed from half a Sa` which equals 1.5 kilograms. There is no harm in giving all the food to one of the needy people or one poor house. May Allah grant us success to do things that please Him! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

General Mufty of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

Q: My aunt suffered from a chronic headache. When she experiences this headache, she feels pain and falls unconscious for eight or ten hours. We hear her moaning in pain when we call her name. Last Ramadan, she broke her fast and she passed away a few days ago. Should her relatives pay Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on her behalf for the days, which she missed? May Allah reward you the best!

A: If this woman recovered after Ramadan and did not make up for the broken fast, it is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) for her relatives to fast on her behalf. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾If anyone dies while he had to make up for some days missed of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast on his behalf.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

133. No making up for missed days of Sawm or feeding on behalf of someone who dies without having time to make up for their missed days

Q: What is the ruling on someone who was ill when Ramadan arrived and did not

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perform the Sawm, and then they died after Ramadan? Should we make up for their missed days of Sawm or feed needy people on their behalf?

A: If a Muslim dies after Ramadan from the illness they have, you do not have to make up for their missed days of Sawm or feed needy people on their behalf, because they are lawfully excused. The same applies to a traveler if they die on a journey or immediately after their return; you do not need to make up for their missed days or feed needy people on their behalf, as they are lawfully excused. However, if they recover from their illness and delay making up for the Sawm until they die, or if a traveler returns home and delays making up for the Sawm until they die, it is prescribed for their heirs, meaning their relatives, to make up for the days they missed on their behalf, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("If anyone dies owing Sawm, their heir should observe Sawm on their behalf.") (Agreed as Sahih [a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish] by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) If there is no one to observe Sawm on their behalf, their heirs should feed needy people from their inheritance half a Sa' (1 Sa' = 2.172 kg) for every missed day. Its estimated amount is a kilo and a half. This applies if their heirs are so old that they cannot observe Sawm or incurably ill. The same also applies to a menstruating woman and a woman in her postpartum period. If they delay making up for the missed days of Sawm until

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they die, their heirs should feed a needy person for each day on their behalf, if there is no one to observe Sawm on their behalf. If they have not left an inheritance that could pay for feeding the people, nothing is required of them, as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope.) He (Glorified be He) also says: (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can) May Allah grant us success!

Q: Due to her illness, my mother did not fast during Ramadan. What should she do?

A: If a Muslim breaks the fast during Ramadan due to illness and dies in that state, they are not sinful. They are not obliged to offer a Kaffarah (expiation) or to make up for the missed fasts, because they are excused and unable to make up for the days missed.

If they are cured and are heedless to make up, it is permissible for their relatives to make up for the missed fasts on their behalf. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If anyone dies in a state (that he had to complete) some days of fast, their heir should fast on their behalf.) When they are unable to fast, they can use the person's inheritance in feeding a needy person half a Sa` (approximately one and half a Kg) of the staple food of the country for each missed day. There is nothing wrong with offering the entire Kaffarah to one needy person.

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His Eminence `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, may Allah safeguard him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Q: We have a girl who died two days ago and she had missed ten days of fasting during Ramadan. Could you kindly advise what should we do? Should we fast these days on her behalf or should we pay charity on her behalf? May Allah grant you success to what is good for Islam and Muslims!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

A: If the girl died during her illness after `Eid, there is nothing due on her whether making up or feeding. If she was healthy after `Eid and could observe Sawm (fasting) and she died accidentally in this case it is permissible for you to fast on her behalf the same number of missed days in which she was healthy after `Eid.

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To His Eminence, Shaykh 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz, may Allah protect him!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Q: A woman asks: during the blessed month of Ramadan, on 9/18/1414 A.H., my mother became so ill that she was obliged to stop observing Sawm (Fasting). On 9/25/1414 A.H., she died.

1-Is it permissible for me to perform Sawm on her behalf to make up for the missed days that she had to perform?

2-Should I perform Sawm on her behalf only for the days during which she was ill or for those after her death as well? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Wa 'alaykum as-salam warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

You do not have to make up for the days that your mother did not perform Sawm, because she is lawfully excused and she had no time to make up for them. Similarly, you do not have to make up for the rest of the month on her behalf. May Allah grant success to everyone! As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

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Q: My mother died before making up for five months in which she had broken her fast due to breastfeeding her five children. She could not make up for the broken fast, because she used to suffer from many diseases such as diabetes and other diseases. However, she was determined to make up for these days and even made up eight days, but she passed away. How should we make up for the broken fasts on her behalf?

A: As long as she did not make up for the broken fast due to her sickness or breastfeeding, she does not have to make up for the missed days or feed a Miskin (needy) because she has a legal excuse. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days.﴿ Your mother did not witness other days in which she could make up for the broken fast. Thus, she will not be accountable for that. On the other hand, you do not have to fast or pay expiation on her behalf, because she had a legal excuse. However, if she did not make up for the broken fast out of negligence, it is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) to make them up on her behalf. Her children or her relatives can cooperate by dividing the days among them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Whoever dies and has some days of Ramadan to fast, his heir should fast them on his/her behalf."﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from the Hadith of `Aishah

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may Allah be pleased with her. If you believe that your mother did not make up for the broken fast out of negligence, you will receive great reward because you made them up on her behalf. It is permissible for you to feed the Miskin, but fasting is better. It was authentically reported by Imam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him) with a good chain of narration on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that ﴾"A woman came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! My mother passed away and she still owed a fast from Ramadan, should I fast it on her behalf?' Thereupon, he (peace be upon him) replied, 'If your mother had left any debts, would you repay them?' She said, 'Yes.' He then said, 'Then, fast for your mother.'"﴿ The two previously mentioned Hadiths and the other Hadiths to the same effect show that the broken fast, be it a vow, Ramadan, or Kaffarah (expiation), should be made up on behalf of the deceased, according to the soundest scholarly view. However, if it is not possible to fast on her behalf, you should feed a Miskin for each day if the deceased neglected to fast, but if she was excused by her illness or any of the legal excuses, her heirs do not have to pay Kaffarah or fast on her behalf.

134- The Hadith stating: (Whoever dies and has missed some days of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast them on his/her behalf) is general in application and is not confined to vows only

Q: As far as I know, the Hadith that reads: (Whoever dies and has missed some days of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast them on his/her behalf) applies to the fasting of vows. However, a scholar stated in a religious show that it is applied to the missed fasts of Ramadan.

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Is this true? Is my knowledge that I acquired from the Salafi books wrong? Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: The correct view is that this Hadith is general in application and not specific to vows. It was narrated from some scholars such as Imam Ahmad that this Hadith is specific to vows. This view is less correct and is stressed by no evidence. The correct view is that it is general because of the Prophet's saying: (Whoever dies and has missed some days of the obligatory fasting, his heir should fast them on his/her behalf) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim who narrated it on the authority of `Aishah). It is impermissible to regard the Prophet's statement as specific to the fasting of vows only unless there is evidence to support it. This Hadith is general in meaning, which applies to fasting pertaining to vows and missed fasts of Ramadan. It explains that if the dead person had the ability to fast and neglected to do so, it is their guardian or heir who should make up for the days the former had missed during Ramadan or fulfilling their vow. The meaning of guardian is a close relative. There is nothing wrong with a non-relative fasting for the deceased. (A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "My mother died missing the fasting of one month. May I fast on my mother's behalf?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay Allah's debt as He has more right to be paid.") Furthermore, a woman asked him (peace be upon him)

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saying: (My mother died missing the fasting of one month. May I fast on my mother's behalf?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay Allah's debt as He has more right to be paid.) In his Musnad, Imam Ahmad narrated through an authentic Isnad on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that: (A woman came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died while it is due on her to fast the missed days of the month of Ramadan; should I fast on her behalf? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Observe fast on behalf of your mother.) The woman in the Hadith pointed out that the fast missed was that of Ramadan and the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered her to fast. There are many Hadiths stressing the importance of making up for the missed fasts of Ramadan and other fasts. There is no good justification for singling out the vows for this fast mentioned in the Hadith. This view is weak and less correct whereas the correct one is

that it is general in application for the evidence stated from the Prophet (peace be upon him). If the deceased died before they got an opportunity to fast what they had missed due to illness, pregnancy or breastfeeding, nobody in this case is asked to fast on behalf of this person or offer Kaffarah (expatiation) as the latter had a Shar`y excuse. However, if the deceased had been cured from illness and had the opportunity to fast and neglected to do so, their relatives should make up for the days that they missed. The same is true with a pregnant or breastfeeding woman. May Allah grant us success!

135- Making up for the expiation of murder on behalf of a dead person and how this is done

Q: My brother died while there was due expiation for manslaughter on him which is fasting for two consecutive months. Is it permissible for me to fast them on his behalf and is it allowable to distribute them among my brothers in order to absolve him?

A: In the name of Allah and all praise is due to Him. It is legal for any of you to to fast two consecutive months on his behalf according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾If anyone dies in a state that they had to complete some days of fasting, their heir is to fast on their behalf.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) This ruling applies to his relatives. However, it is not permissible to distribute days among a group but one only of them who can fast the months consecutively as Allah (glory be to him) said concerning the killer: ﴾And whoso finds this (the penance of freeing a slave) beyond his means, he must fast for two consecutive months﴿ However, if he is able to manumit a slave, he should do it and fasting does not absolve him. May Allah grant us success!

136- Passing away during Ramadan absolves the dead of the obligation

Q: My father died on the third day of Ramadan; should I continue fasting Ramadan on his behalf? Should I fast twenty seven days for him?

A: You are not required to do anything, for the death of you father exonerated him of the obligation and thereupon it is not allowable for you to do so.

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Supererogatory fasting

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137- Ruling on fasting on days of Tashriq

Q: If a person was obliged to fast for expiation, owing to his inability to offer Hady (sacrificial animal offered by pilgrims); may he fast during the three days of Tashriq?

A: You should fast these three days, if you are a pilgrim for this is a license for pilgrims, who did not fast and those who were unable to offer Hady in particular. Otherwise, the Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) are intended for eating and drinking and it is not permissible to fast during these days except for the people mentioned above who were unable to offer Hady during Hajj as it is allowable for them to fast these three days in particular and after returning home they should fast seven days in addition.

138- Ruling on fasting the thirteenth day of Dhul-Hijjah with the aim that it is one of the white days

Q: Brother `A. `A. H. from Buraydah says, "My mother, may Allah grant her success, usually fasts on the three White Days (the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth days of every lunar month). As usual, the thirteenth day of Dhul-Hijjah is the third day

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of Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). Should she fast on this day or be satisfied with the fourteenth and fifteenth only of the month of Dhul-Hijjah?

A: It is not permissible to fast on the thirteenth of Dhul Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade fasting on the days of Tashriq saying: ﴾These days are days of eating, drinking, and remembrance of Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted).﴿ Fasting on the Days of Tashriq is only permissible for those who are unable to offer Hady (sacrificial animal offered by pilgrims) if they are observing Tamattu` Hajj (combining Hajj and `Umrah with a break in between) or Qiran Hajj (combining Hajj and `Umrah simultaneously) according to what Al-Bukhari (may Allah confer mercy upon him) related on the authority of `A'ishah and Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that they said, ﴾No one is permitted to fast on the days of Tashriq except a person who cannot find (or afford) Hady.﴿ However, it is permissible for her to fast on the fourteenth and fifteenth if she can. It is better to fast on the sixteenth or any other day of Dhul-Hijjah in order to complete the three days. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) advised a group of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) to fast on three days of every month and this was not restricted to the white days but it is better to fast them. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Can I observe fasting the white days (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) if they coincide with the days of Tashriq?

A: It is not permissible to fast on the thirteenth of Dhul-Hijjah, whether it is a voluntary fast or an obligatory fast, because these are the days of eating, drinking and remembering Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade fasting on these days and did not grant a concession to anyone except for pilgrims performing Tamattu` Hajj who could not find a sacrificial animal. They can observe fasting during the three days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) in expiation for the sacrificial animal and then fast the seven remaining days when they return to their homelands. This is based on what has been authentically narrated in the Sahih Book of Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) on the authority of both `A'ishah and ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) who said: ("No one was permitted to fast on the days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) except for one who cannot find (or afford) Hady (sacrificial animal offered by pilgrims).")

As for fasting the fourteenth and fifteenth days, there is no harm in that, because they are not of the Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). May Allah grant us success!

One can observe fasting three days throughout the whole month. Yet, fasting them on the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) is better

Q: Is it permissible for a person to make up for not fasting the White Days as when a person starts

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to fast them but certain circumstances hinder him from completing them?

A: It is prescribed for the believers, men and women, to fast three days of every month. It is better to fast them on the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month). Yet, if a person fasts them during any other days throughout the whole month, this will suffice because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that three days of every month should be fasted and explained that fasting them during the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) is much better than doing so on any other days. Thus, if a person is accustomed to fasting the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) but something happened that made them too busy to do so, then it is permissible for them to fast other days throughout the month, praise be to Allah. This cannot be called making up (for) these days, because the whole month from its beginning to its end is suitable for fasting. Thus, if a believer, man or woman, observes fasting three days at its beginning, middle, or end, then they would be applying an act of Sunnah even when fasting them on days other than the White Days.

Fasting during the white days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) should follow the calendar and a Muslim may fast them consecutively or separately

Q: Brother `A.M.M. from Tanta, Egypt says in his question: It is known to your Eminence that determining the beginning of ordinary lunar months is not the focus of attention of everyone. Therefore, what about fasting the white days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) of every month? I mean how can a person determine

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these days in order for a person to fast them. Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is prescribed for a person to fast them according to the calendar based on what is certain. Yet, fasting them on days other than their proper days suffices a person, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that they should be fasted every month and did not confine fasting them to such days exclusively. It is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with them both): ﴾Observe Sawm (fast) for three days during the month; for every good deed is multiplied ten times and this is like fasting forever.﴿ It is stated in the Two Sahih (authentic) books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾My friend (the Prophet (peace be upon him)) advised me to observe three things: to fast three days a month; to pray two Rak`ahs of Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer after sunrise); and to pray Witr before sleeping.﴿ There are many Hadiths that have been narrated in this regard. A person has the choice either to fast them consecutively or separately, because the Hadiths did not confine fasting them to be consecutive. May Allah grant us success!

141- Desirability to fast the White Days even in Sha'ban

Q: What is the ruling on fasting the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) in Sha'ban?

A: It is Mustahab (desirable) to fast these three days in Sha'ban or any other months. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'As to do so. It was also authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) advised Abu Al-Darda' and Abu Hurayrah to fast these three days. Yet, there is nothing wrong if a person fasts these three days in some months and not in others, or to fast them at times and leave fasting them at others, because fasting them is a Nafilah (supererogatory act of worship) not a Faridah (obligatory act of worship). But it is preferable to keep on fasting them every month, if possible.

Reconciling the Hadith: "When Sha'ban is half over, do not fast" with the Hadith stating that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to join the Sawm of Sha'ban with Ramadan

Q: I read in "Sahih Al-Jami'" Hadith no. 397

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verified by Al-Albany and reported by Al-Suyuty no. 398, which he ranked as Sahih (authentic), on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (When Sha'ban is half over, do not fast until the advent of Ramadan.) **There is also another Hadith reported by Al-Suyuty no. 8757, ranked as Sahih and verified by Al-Albany in "Sahih Al-Jami'" no. 4638 on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said:** (The most beloved of months for him (peace be upon him) to fast in was Sha'ban which was continuous with his Sawm (Fasting) in Ramadan.) **How can we reconcile the two Hadiths?**

A: Bismillah [In the Name of Allah], and all praise be to Allah, to proceed; the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to fast the whole of Sha'ban except for a few days, as authentically reported from the Hadith of 'Aishah and Um Salamah. As for the Hadith that prohibits observing Sawm after the middle of Sha'ban, it is Sahih as mentioned by the knowledgeable brother, Shaykh Nasir Al-Din Al-Albany. What is meant is that it is not permissible to start fasting after halfway through the month of Sha'ban, but if a person fasts most of or all of the month, they will be acting upon the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). Allah is the Grantor of success!

143- Whoever does not complete fasting the white days will be rewarded for the days they have fasted

Q: Brother A.M. from Omdurman, in Sudan says: I fasted only two days of the white days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month) but I could not fast the third day due to some circumstances. Will I be rewarded for fasting these two days?

A: There is no doubt that you will be rewarded for these two days as long as you fasted them for the sake of Allah (Glorified be He) free from showing off or seeking people's praise, as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Whoever brings a good deed (Islâmic Monotheism and deeds of obedience to Allâh and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم) shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit) in addition to other Hadiths and Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) mentioned to that effect. May Allah grant us success!

Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays

Q: Brother M.`A.`A. from Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah says in his question: Your eminence Sheikh, I can not fast Thursday for particular reasons, so is it enough to fast only on Monday every

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week or should I fast both Monday and Thursday?

A: There is no blame on you if you fast one of the two mentioned days. Fasting them is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet), not obligatory. So anyone who fasts one or both of them will have a great reward. It is not obligatory to fast both of them and it is only Mustahab (desirable) as indicated by authentic Hadiths said by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). May Allah guide us all!

145- Merits of fasting Monday and Thursday over fasting on the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month)

Q: For a long time, my mother has been observing fasting on Thursdays and Mondays every week. Now, she wants to know whether it is better to continue doing so or to fast three days in every month. Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: This deed is better and of more reward. It includes fasting the three days as well. (The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) fasted Mondays and Thursdays and said they are two days in which deeds are presented

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to Allah (may He be Praised), so I like my deeds to be presented to Allah while I am fasting.) May Allah grant us success!

146- Ruling on making up for the six days of Shawwal later

Q: A woman used to fast six days of Shawwal every year. One year, she gave birth to a child in the beginning of Ramadan and she made up for the missed days of Ramadan when she became ritually pure after her postpartum period. Should she make up for the six days of Shawwal? Or should she make up for Ramadan only? Is it obligatory or not to maintain fasting those six days of Shawwal?

A: Fasting the six days of Shawwal is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet), not Fard (obligatory, based on a definitive text), according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (If a person observes Sawm (Fast) in Ramadan and follows it with six days of Shawwal, it would be as if they have observed Sawm perpetually) Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith. The mentioned Hadith indicates that there is nothing wrong with fasting these days continuously or

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separately, as its wording is general.

However, hastening to do this is better, according to Allah's Saying: (and I hastened to You, O my Lord, that You might be pleased.) The Qur'anic Ayahs and Hadiths also indicate that it is better to hasten to offer good deeds. It should be noted that maintaining them permanently is not obligatory. However, it is better to do so, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (The deed that is most favored by Allah is that which its doer is persistent in offering it even though it is small) It is not prescribed to make up for them after the end of Shawwal, since this act is a Sunnah and its time has expired, whether it has been left for an excuse or not. Allah is the One Who grants success!

147- The false claim that fasting for six days of Shawwal is Bid'ah

Q: What is your opinion, respected shaykh, regarding people who claim that fasting for six days in Shawwal is Bid'ah (innovation in religion) and that this is the view of Imam Malik? If they are refuted by the Hadith on the authority of Abu Ayyub, saying: (Anyone who fasts Ramadan and then follows it with (fasting) six days of Shawwal it is as if they fasted the whole year) **they would bring to question the authenticity of one of the narrator in the Isnad (chain of narrators).**

A: This claim is Batil (null and void); the Hadith of Abu Ayyub is Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish).

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It also has other supporting narrations, which strengthen it and confirm its meaning.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

148- The entire month of Shawwal is a time for fasting the six days

Q: Is it permissible for a person to choose any six days to observe Sawm (Fasting) in Shawwal, or is there a fixed time for them? If we observe Sawm on them, will it become a Fard (obligation) on us?

A: It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Anyone who fasts Ramadan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal it is as if they fasted the whole year.﴾ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) These days are not fixed in the month. A Mu'min (believer) can choose to observe them at any time throughout the month, whether in the beginning, middle, or end of the month, and whether on separate or consecutive days. There is flexibility in this matter, praise be to Allah. If a person observes them in the beginning of the month, it will be even better, as this is a form of hastening to do good deeds. It is not thus, considered a Fard; a person can leave them in any year.

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However, it is better and more perfect to continue observing Sawm on these days every year, acting on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿The deed liked most by Allah is one to which the doer adheres constantly, even if it is small.﴾ May Allah grant us success!

149- Fasting the six days of Shawwal does not have to be consecutive

Q: Is it obligatory to fast the six days of Shawwal consecutively, or one may fast them separately during the month?

A: Observing Sawm (Fast) on six days of Shawwal is a stressed Sunnah reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It is permissible to observe Sawm on these days either consecutively or separately. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) generally urged us to observe Sawm during six days of Shawwal, but he did not specify either consecutively or separately. He (peace be upon him) said: (Anyone who fasts Ramadan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal it is as if they fasted the whole year.) (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

150- Desirability of making up the missed days of Ramadan before observing Sawm for six days in Shawwal

Q: Is it permissible to observe Sawm (fasting) for six days in Shawwal before making up for the missed days in Ramadan?

A: Scholars disagreed about this matter; however, the strongest opinion is that it is prescribed to give precedence to observing Sawm of the missed days in Ramadan over the six days of Shawwal and other supererogatory Sawm, according to the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾If a person observes Sawm in Ramadan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal, it would be as if they have observed Sawm perpetually.﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith. If a person chooses to observe Sawm of the six days of Shawwal first, they will not follow it by Sawm of all Ramadan, but some of it. Making up for the missed days in Ramadan is a Fard (obligation), while the six days of Shawwal are supererogatory, and a Fard is more important to fulfill. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A Muslim sister from Al-Majma`ah is asking: I was unable to fast during Ramadan due to my post-partum bleeding. I was purified during the days of `Eid and I really wish to fast six days of Shawwal. Is it permissible to fast these days then start making up for my missed days of Ramadan? Please give us your Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) and may Allah guide you to all goodness!

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A: It is necessary to start by making up for your missed days of fasting in Ramadan, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Anyone who observed the fast of Ramadan and then followed it with six days (of fasting) in Shawwal, it would be as if they fasted permanently.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih" book of authentic Hadith). Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) shows us that fasting six days of Shawwal comes after fasting Ramadan. It is your duty to start by making up for your missed days of fasting, even if you miss fasting six days in Shawwal, based on the previous Hadith. Moreover, Fard (obligatory) acts take precedence over Nafilah (supererogatory) acts. May Allah guide us all to Success!

Q: Is it permissible for a person who has days to fast from Ramadan to fast the six days of Shawwal before making up for the days they missed from Ramadan, since these days can be made up for at any time while the days of Shawwal should be fasted only in Shawwal? Please, advise. May Allah reward you well!

A: It is prescribed for you to make up for the days you missed from Ramadan first before fasting the six days of Shawwal. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever fasts Ramadan and follows it with six days of Shawwal, it will be as if he fasted a lifetime.") If the person fasted the six days before making up for the missed days, they will not be following all of Ramadan, but some of it. Moreover, the Fard (obligatory, based on a definitive text) is more important so it should be given priority.

151- It is not permissible to fast the six days of Shawwal before the expiatory fast

Q: A man has to observe Sawm (Fast) for two consecutive months as a Kaffarah (expiation), but he wants to fast the six days of Shawwal. Is it permissible for him to do so?

A: You have to hasten to fulfill the Kaffarah; it is not permissible to fast the six days of Shawwal before the Kaffarah, for fasting these six days is a Nafl (supererogatory act of worship) while the Kaffarah is a Fard (obligatory act of worship) which should be carried out immediately. It should be given priority over the Sawm of the six days of Shawwal or any other supererogatory Sawm.

152- Ruling on performing supererogatory Sawm for a person who has to make up for missed days of fasting

Q: What is the ruling on supererogatory Sawm (Fast), such as the six days of Shwwal, the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah and the Day of `Ashura' (10th of Muharram), for a person who has to make up for days from Ramadan?

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A: One has to make up for the missed days of Ramadan before starting the supererogatory Sawm, because the obligatory act of worship is more important than the supererogatory according to the most preponderant of the scholars' opinions.

Following Ramadan with fasting six days of Shawwal as a Sunnah and not a Wajib whose reward is granted even if not completed due to an excuse

Q: A Muslim sister from Amman, Jordan is asking: I started fasting six days of Shawwal when some circumstances and business interrupted me. I could not fast the remaining two days. What can I do? Do I make up for missing these two days? Will I bear a sin for not completing the six days?

A: fasting six days during Shawwal is a Mustahab (desirable) act of worship and not a Wajib (obligatory). You will receive the reward of the days on which you fasted and hopefully you will receive the full reward of fasting for six days, if you had a valid excuse for not completing them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("When a servant falls ill or travels, Allah will record for them the same reward of the good deeds they used to do when they were at home and in good health.") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih" book of authentic Hadith). You do not have to make up for those two missed days, and may Allah guide us all to success!

154- It is permissible to fast the six days of Shawwal directly after the missed days of Ramadan

Q: A questioner from Al-Ladhiqiyyah inquires: I heard that it is not permissible that the Sawm observed to make up for the missed days of Ramadan be directly continuous with the Nafl (supererogatory) Sawm; meaning that if one broke fast some days in Ramadan due to a Shar'y (Islamically lawful) excuse, then made up for them in Shawwal and wanted to fast the six days of Shawwal, one should not join them and should break fast a day in-between. Is this right? Kindly, guide us!

A: I do not know of any basis in Shari'ah (Islamic law) for what you mentioned. The correct view is that there is nothing wrong with this, based upon the generality of evidence. May Allah grant us success!

155- Encouraging Muslims to observe Sawm on the Day of `Ashura'

All praise be to Allah Alone and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah and upon his family, companions, and whoever follows his teachings.

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to observe Sawm (Fast) on the Day of `Ashura' (10th of Muharram) and he would encourage people to do so. This is because on that Day Allah (Exalted be He) rescued Moses (Musa, peace be upon him) and his people and destroyed Pharaoh and his people. Therefore, it is Mustahab (desirable) for every male and female Muslim to observe Sawm on that Day i.e. the 10th day of Muharram, to express their gratitude to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). In addition, it is Mustahab to observe Sawm on the day preceding `Ashura' or on the succeeding day in order to differ from the Jews with regard to the way of observing this Sawm. However, a person may observe Sawm for the three days altogether i.e. the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh of Muharram for it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Differ from the Jews and observe Sawm for one day before `Ashura' and one day after it.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾Observe Sawm for a day before (the Day of `Ashura') or after it.﴿ It is also authentically reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about observing Sawm on the Day of `Ashura', he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah expiates by it the sins of the

past year.﴿ There are many other Hadith encouraging Muslims to observe Sawm on the Day of `Ashura'. The calendar shows that Saturday will be the 30th of Dhul-Hijjah of this current year 1416 A.H. Nevertheless, sighting the new moon may confirm this or prove it is the first of Muharram 1417 A.H. and that Dhul-Hijjah of the year 1416 A. H. is only 29 days. Accordingly, it is better for Muslims this year to observe Sawm on Monday and Tuesday to be on the safe side as Sunday may be the 9th of Muharram if Dhul-Hijjah is only 29 days, or the 8th if Dhul-Hijjah is 30 days. However, observing Sawm on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday is good as doing so is a further precaution to guarantee applying the Sunnah (a commendable act) and because observing Sawm on three days of each month is a well-established Sunnah as explained previously. Finally, I ask Allah to guide us and all Muslims to all that pleases Him and to make us all amongst those who hasten to all goodness. Verily, Allah is the Most Generous, the Most Bountiful. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

`Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chairman of Council of Senior Scholars

and the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

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All praise be to Allah Alone. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah and upon his family, companions, and whoever follows his guidance.

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to observe Sawm (Fast) on the Day of `Ashura' (10th of Muharram) and he would encourage people to do so. This is because on that Day Allah (Exalted be He) rescued Moses (Musa, peace be upon him) and his people and destroyed Pharaoh and his people. Therefore, it is Mustahab (desirable) for every male and female Muslim to observe Sawm on that Day, the 10th of Muharram, to express their thankfulness to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). In addition, it is Mustahab that a person observes Sawm as well for the day preceding the day of `Ashura' or succeeding it to avoid the example of the Jews with regard to the way of observing such Sawm. However, a person may observe Sawm for the three days altogether i.e. the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh of Muharram for it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Contradict the Jews and observe Sawm for one day before `Ashura' and one day after it.﴿ According to another narration: "Observe Sawm for a day before (the Day of `Ashura') or after it." Moreover, it is authentically reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about observing Sawm on the Day of `Ashura'; he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah expiates by it the sins of the past year.﴿ There are many other Hadith

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encouraging Muslims to observe Sawm on the Day of `Ashura'. On the other hand, the calendar shows that Monday will be the 1st day of Muharram of the year 1419 A.H. Nevertheless, sighting the new moon may ascertain this and confirm that Dhul-Hijjah is only 29 days or prove that the same day (Monday) is the last day of Dhul-Hijjah (of the year 1418 A. H.). Accordingly, it is better for Muslims this year to observe Sawm on Wednesday which is corresponding to the tenth of Muharram according to the calendar along with Thursday or to observe Sawm on Thursday and Friday. This is because Wednesday may be the tenth of Muharram in case Dhul-Hijjah is 29 days or the ninth of it in case Dhul-Hijjah is thirty days. However, observing Sawm on Wednesday only, Thursday and Friday, or Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday is sufficient for applying the concerned Sunnah (a commendable act). To be specific, observing Sawm for the three days is a further precaution to guarantee applying Sunnah bearing in mind that observing Sawm on three days of each month is a well-established Sunnah as explained previously. Finally, I ask Allah to guide us and all Muslims to all that pleases Him and to make us all amongst those who hasten to all goodness. Verily, Allah is the Most Generous, the Most Bountiful.

May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

`Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and Chairman of Council of Senior Scholars

and the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

156- Ruling on moon sighting for the night of 'Ashura'

Q: Many Muslims are keen to observe Sawm (Fast) on the Day of 'Ashura' (10th of Muharram) as Du'ah (callers to Islam) always encourage them to do so. Why do you not then direct people to sight the new moon of Muharram then broadcast the news of the confirmed sighting via the media?

A: It is a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to observe Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura', for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) observed Sawm on that day. Prophet Musa (Moses, peace be upon him) also observed this Sawm as an expression of gratitude to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). They did so because on that Day Allah rescued Musa and his people and destroyed Pharaoh and his people. Therefore, Musa (peace be upon him) and the Children of Israel observed this Sawm out of gratitude to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). Our Prophet (peace be upon him) did the same thanking Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and following the example of Prophet Musa. In addition, people of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) used to observe Sawm on the same Day, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) stressed the importance of observing Sawm on it, but this changed when Allah obligated observing Sawm in Ramadan, so the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Anyone who wishes to observe Sawm on it (the Day of 'Ashura') may do so, and anyone who wishes to abandon it may do so.﴿

However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that observing Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura' expiates the sins of the past year.

It is preferred to observe Sawm also on the day preceding or succeeding 'Ashura' to differ from the practice of the Jews. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Fast a day before (the Day of 'Ashura') or after it.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾Fast a day before (the Day of 'Ashura') and a day after it.﴿ Thus, a person applies the Sunnah by observing Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura' along with one day before or after it, or along with one day before it and one day after it, or by observing Sawm on all the three days. All the forms mentioned above are good as they differ from the practice of Allah's enemies, i.e. the Jews. As for sighting the new moon of Muharram to know the exact night of 'Ashura' (9th of Muharram), this is not necessary as observing Sawm on 'Ashura' is Nafilah (supererogatory act of worship) not Faridah (obligatory act of worship). Moreover, if a Muslim is not sure about the exact Day of 'Ashura' and observes Sawm on the day before it and the day after it; this will be accepted and they will be greatly rewarded. Therefore, it is not necessary to observe the new moon marking the beginning of Muharram just for this reason, because it is only Nafilah.

157-Ruling on relying on the calendar for Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura'

Q: I am a young man whom Allah (Exalted be He) guided to the right path. I like to observe Sawm (Fast) on the Day of 'Ashura' (10th of Muharram) and on all other virtuous days beside Ramadan.

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My question is whether it is permissible to depend on the calendar to determine the start of Muharram, or is it better to observe Sawm on the two days preceding and succeeding 'Ashura' to be on the safe side? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: You have to depend on sighting the new moon, but if the efforts to sight the new moon failed, stay on the safer side by completing Dhul-Hijjah thirty days. May Allah grant us all success!

158- Observing Sawm on the ninth and tenth of Muharram is better than on the tenth and eleventh

Q: What is the ruling on observing Sawm (Fast) on the Day of 'Ashura' (10th of Muharram)? Is it better to observe Sawm on the day that precedes it, the day that succeeds it, all the three days, or on the Day of 'Ashura' only? Please clarify the matter. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to observe Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura' for the authentic Hadiths in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated so. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that the Jews used to observe Sawm on that Day because it was the day on which Allah (Exalted be He) rescued Prophet Musa (Moses, peace be upon him)

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and his people and destroyed Pharaoh and his people. Our Prophet Muhammad thus, observed Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura' to express his gratitude to Allah, advised Muslims to do so, and directed us as well to observe Sawm on the day preceding or succeeding it. However, observing Sawm on the ninth and tenth of Muharram is better than doing so on the tenth and eleventh. The latter form is also sufficient for it contradicts the practice of the Jews as well. One may also observe Sawm on all three days, i.e. the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh of Muharram as is reported in some narrations: (Fast a day before (the Day of 'Ashura') and a day after it.) But, it is Makruh (reprehensible) to observe Sawm on the Day of 'Ashura' only, i.e. without accompanying it by the preceding or the succeeding day. May Allah grant us success!

159- The ruling if a person discovers that he observed Sawm on a day other than `Ashura'

Q: What is the ruling in case a person observed Sawm of the ninth and the tenth and later discovered that they were the eighth and the ninth of Muharram, because the calendar was incorrect? Do they have to make up for the Sawm of the Day of `Ashura' (10th of Muharram)?

A: Such a person does not have to make up for the Day of `Ashura'. However, they will get the full reward in sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) for their good intention, as they followed the calendar thinking it was correct.

Q: While a person was observing Sawm (Fast) on the ninth of Muharram, he discovers that the tenth of the month is the next day; are they to continue the Sawm for the three days?

A: It is better to continue the Sawm on the three days to be sure that one observes Sawm on the tenth of Muharram. However, they may leave Sawm on the next day and thus miss the Sawm of the Day of `Ashura' (10th of Muharram).

160- Ruling on pilgrims and non-pilgrims fasting on the Day of 'Arafah

Q: Respected Shaykh, many people think that observing Sawm (Fast) on the Day of 'Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) is to be accompanied by observing Sawm on the eighth of Dhul-Hijjah; please advise?

A: The Day of 'Arafah can be fasted separately, which has a great merit as Allah (Exalted be He) expiates by it the sins of the year before and after it. As for pilgrims, it is impermissible for them to observe Sawm on the Day of 'Arafah because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood on that day without observing Sawm.

Q: What is the ruling on observing Sawm (Fast) on the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) for a pilgrim? What should a person do if the Day of `Arafah is on Friday?

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A: A pilgrim is not required to observe Sawm on the Day of `Arafah and in case that they did so we are afraid that they might be considered sinful for doing so. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade Muslims who were in `Arafah (the area that surrounds Mount Rahmah, southeast of Makkah) to observe Sawm on the Day of `Arafah. Moreover, he (peace be upon him) did not observe Sawm on that Day in the year when he performed Hajj. Accordingly, a pilgrim should not observe Sawm on the Day of `Arafah and in case they deliberately do so, though they know that the Prophet forbade it, they might be considered sinful as forbidding something is originally tantamount to declaring it as Haram (prohibited).

161- Ruling on observing Sawm on the Day of `Arafah for a person who has to make up for some missed days

Q: Is it permissible that a person observes Sawm (Fast) on the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) though they have to make up for some missed days of Ramadan?

A: The pilgrims should not observe Sawm on the Day of `Arafah, as it is Wajib (obligatory) on them to leave fasting on that Day. However, it is Mustahab (desirable) for non-pilgrims to observe Sawm on the Day of `Arafah, because it expiates the sins of the past year and the next one and it has great blessings. However, the pilgrims should not observe Sawm on that Day, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not observe Sawm when he was at `Arafah and forbade other pilgrims to do so. However, in case that a non-pilgrim has to make up for some missed days, they have to start with making up for such days and they may do so during the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah including the Day of `Arafah.

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162- Days forbidden to fast

Q: What are the days religiously reprehensible to fast on?

A: It is forbidden to fast on Friday only as a supererogatory act, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade this.

Similarly, there should be no Sawm on Saturday only but if one should fast on Friday and Saturday together or fast on Thursday and Friday, as indicated by the Hadiths of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him).

It is also forbidden to fast on the Day of `Eid Al-Fitr, the Day of `Eid Al-Nahr [`Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice)] and Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared Sawm forbidden on these days. However, there are Prophetic Hadiths showed that it is allowable to fast on the Days of Tashriq for a pilgrim performing Tamattu` Hajj (combining Hajj and `Umrah with a break in between) or Qiran Hajj (combining Hajj and `Umrah simultaneously) while being unable to offer the required Hady (sacrificial animal offered by pilgrims). It is reported by Al-Bukhari on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that they said, (Nobody was allowed to fast on the days of Tashriq

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except those who could not find (or afford) the Hady.) Fasting on them voluntarily or for any other cause is not permissible similar to the day of `Eid. The ruling of prohibition is also applicable to the thirtieth of Sha`ban if sighting the new crescent is not verified yet. In this case, this day is regarded as a day of doubt that is not allowable to fast on according to the preponderant scholarly view, no matter it is clear or cloudy, because of the authentic Hadiths indicating the prohibition of doing so. May Allah grant us success!

163- Impermissibility of Sawm on the Day of Doubt, even if the sky is overcast

Q: If it is cloudy or overcast, is it obligatory or prescribed to observe Sawm (Fasting) on the Day of Doubt (the 30th of Sha'ban) as a precaution, in case the month has begun?

A: It is not permissible to perform Sawm on the Day of Doubt (so called because there is doubt concerning it - is it the last day of Sha'ban or the first day of Ramadan), even if the sky is cloudy, because the Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ⟪Start Sawm (Fast) when you see it (the new moon of Ramadan) and stop Sawm when you see it (the new moon of Shawwal); but if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete the number of days (of Sha'ban to thirty days).⟫ He (peace be upon him) also said: ⟪Do not observe Sawm for a day or two days ahead of Ramadan

except a person who is in the habit of observing a particular Sawm; they may fast on that day.⟫

As for what is narrated about Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), that he used to observe Sawm on the 30th of Sha'ban if it was cloudy, this was his Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings), but the correct opinion is the opposite of this; it is obligatory not to observe Sawm on that day. Ibn 'Umar practiced Ijtihad in this case, but his Ijtihad opposed the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet), may Allah forgive him! The correct opinion is that the Muslims must not observe Sawm on the 30th of Sha'ban, if the new moon of Ramadan is not sighted. If it is cloudy, it is obligatory not to observe Sawm. It is not permissible to start observing Sawm until the sighting of the new moon is confirmed or Sha'ban is completed with thirty days. This is what is obligatory on Muslims, and it is not permissible to oppose the Nas (Islamic text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah) for the personal opinion of an individual, whether he is Ibn 'Umar or anyone else, because the Nas takes precedence over all opinions, as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ⟪And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).⟫ He (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ⟪And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad peace be upon him) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah - legal ways - orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.⟫

164. Authenticity of the Hadith stating, ("Anyone who observes Sawm on the day that is doubted has disobeyed Abul-Qasim (Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).")

Q: We would like to ask, Your Eminence, about the authenticity of the Hadith narrated on the authority of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, which states, ("Anyone who observes Sawm on the day that is doubted (i.e., the 30th of Sha'ban) has disobeyed Abul-Qasim (Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).")

A: This Hadith is Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish); it is considered as Marfu' (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration). He (may Allah be pleased with him) said, ("Anyone who observes Sawm on the day that is doubted has disobeyed Abul-Qasim (peace be upon him).") (Related by Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan [authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes] with a Sahih [authentic] Isnad [chain of narrators]) This confirms what we mentioned previously, and what the scholars have said, that we should not observe Sawm on the Day of Doubt (so called because there is doubt concerning it - is it the last day of Sha'ban or the first day of Ramadan). May Allah grant us success!

165. The Hadith forbidding Sawm on Saturday is not Sahih

Q: Is the Hadith that forbids the observance of Sawm (Fasting) on Saturdays, except for

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the obligatory Sawm, Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish)?

A: The Hadith that you mentioned is not Sahih; it has been ranked as Mudtarib (a Hadith with disagreement over a transmitter or the text) and Shadh (a Hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, not in line with the narration of other trustworthy narrators in terms of wording, chain of narrators, or both) by many Hafizh (scholars who have memorized Hadith), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said, ("Do not observe Sawm on Friday, unless you observe Sawm on the day before it or the day after it.") (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim as Sahih) The day that follows it is Saturday.

This Hadith clearly tells that it is permissible to observe Sawm on Saturdays as a Nafilah (supererogatory act of worship) with Friday. It was also authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that (He (peace be upon him) used to observe Sawm on Saturdays and Sundays, saying, "They are feast days for the Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), and I want to do the opposite of them.") (Related by Al-Nasa'y and ranked as Sahih by Ibn Khuzaymah)

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166. Permissibility of voluntary Sawm on Saturdays

To His Eminence, Shaykh 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz, the Grand Mufty (Islamic scholar qualified to issue legal opinions) of Saudi Arabia, may Allah protect him!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

As you know, this year the 9th of Muharram was on a Saturday, and the 10th was on a Sunday, according to the Makkan calendar. Acting upon the Hadith that states, ("If I live until next year, I will perform Sawm (Fasting) on the 9th and 10th (of Muharram).") **I performed Sawm on Saturday and Sunday.**

However, one of my Muslim brothers objected to my Sawm on Saturday, and told me that it is forbidden to perform a voluntary Sawm on Saturdays, based on a Hadith whose meaning he told me but not its text.

Due to my desire for clarification on this matter, and acting upon the Words of Allah (Exalted be He): (So ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know.) **I would like**

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Your Eminence to explain this ambiguity, mentioning the Hadith and the degree of its authenticity, and advise me on this matter. May Allah protect you!

A: Wa 'alaykum as-salam warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

The Hadith he mentioned is well-known and included in: "Bulugh Al-Maram", in the chapter on Sawm. However, it is a Hadith Da'if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators) and Shadh (a Hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, not in line with the narration of other trustworthy narrators in terms of wording, chain of narrators, or both), and contradicts the Hadith Sahih (Hadith that have been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish), one of which is the next one in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Do not perform Sawm on Fridays, unless you perform Sawm on the day before it or the day after it.") It is known that the day that follows Friday is Saturday; and also this Hadith, which is mentioned in the Two Sahih Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim): (The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform Sawm on Saturdays and Sundays, saying, "They are feast days for the Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), and I like to do the opposite of them.") There are many Hadith that carry the same meaning and they all show the permissibility of voluntary Sawm on Saturday. May Allah grant success to all! As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

The Grand Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars

and the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta’

167. Ruling on performing Sawm on Fridays only

Q: Is it permissible to perform Sawm (Fasting) only on a Friday to make up for missed days of Sawm?

A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade us from performing Sawm on Fridays only, if it is fasted for the special merit of that day. It is reported that (The Prophet (peace be upon him) visited one of his wives on a Friday when she was performing Sawm. He (peace be upon him) asked her, "Did you perform Sawm yesterday?" She said, "No." He (peace be upon him) said, "Do you intend to perform Sawm tomorrow?" She said, "No." He (peace be upon him) said, "Then break your Sawm.") It was also mentioned in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Do not perform Sawm on Friday, unless you perform Sawm on the day before it or the day after it.") However, if the Day of 'Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) is on a Friday; there is nothing wrong with performing Sawm on that day alone, if it is fasted with the intention of performing Sawm for the Day of 'Arafah, and not because it is a Friday. Likewise, if someone has to make up for missed days of Sawm from Ramadan, and they have no other time except a Friday, there is nothing wrong with performing Sawm just on that day, because it is their vacation day.

The same also applies if the Day of 'Ashura' (10th of Muharram) falls on a Friday, there is nothing wrong with performing Sawm on it alone, because it is done with the intention of fasting the Day of 'Ashura', not a Friday. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Do not single out Friday (among days) for Sawm, nor its night (i.e. Thursday night, as in the Hijri calendar the night precedes the day) for Qiyam (standing for optional Prayer at night).") The Nas (Islamic text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah) refers to singling out, i.e., people doing these acts of worship specifically because it is Friday or the night of Friday.

168- Ruling on fasting in Muharram, Sha'ban and the Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah

Q: What is the religious ruling on observing Sawm (Fasting) on the last Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah and the whole of the months of Muharram and Sha'ban? Answer us, may Allah confer His Blessings upon you!

A: Bismillah [In the Name of Allah] and all praise is due to Him. It is Mashru' (Islamically permissible) to fast in the month of Muharram and Sha'ban. As for the last Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah, there is no evidence concerning fasting on them; but there is nothing wrong with fasting on them without having the belief that they have certain specialty or fasting is recommended on them in particular.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) said concerning the month of Muharram: ﴾The best Sawm after Ramadan, is the Month of Allah: Muharram.﴿ Therefore, it is recommendable to fast the whole of Muharram and it is Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to fast on the ninth, the tenth and the eleventh of it.

Similarly, it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to fast the entire of Sha'ban or most of it as authentically reported in the Hadith of 'Aishah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with both of them).

With regard to fasting the Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah, first of all what is meant is the first nine days, as the Day of 'Eid is not allowable to fast on, but it is recommendable to fast on these nine days for it brings a great reward according to the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾'There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days.' They asked, 'Not even Jihad (fighting/striving) in the Cause of Allah?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'Not even Jihad in the Cause of Allah, except for a man who goes out (for Jihad) with his self and his wealth, and comes back with nothing of that.'﴿ There are Hadiths that indicate that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to fast on these days and others that show that he (peace be upon him) did not fast on them, but nothing has been authentically reported that determines his fasting or not fasting them.

169- Understanding the Hadiths on fasting the first ten days of Dhul- Hijjah

Q: It is recorded by Al-Nasa'y in his Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) on the authority of the Mother of Believers, Hafsah (may Allah be pleased with her) that ("The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never missed three things acts: fasting the (first) ten days (of Dhul-Hijjah), fasting three days monthly, and offering two Rak`ahs before the Fajr Prayer.") **. It is also recorded by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:** ("I never saw the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) fasting the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah.") **In another narration: He never fast the ten days.**

Al-Shawkany stated in Nayl Al-Awtar (volume 4, p. 324) the views of some scholars concerning the reconciliation between the Hadith of Hafsah and that of `Aishah but this reconciliation is not convincing. What is the view of Your Eminence?

A: I have viewed both of the reports and it becomes clear to me that the Hadith reported on the authority of Hafsah is Hadith Mudtarib (a Hadith with disagreement over a transmitter or the text) while the Hadith reported on the authority of `Aishah is more authentic. The reconciliation stated by Al-Shawkany is debatable, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not have

fasted the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah without the knowledge of `Aishah. That is because the Prophet (peace be upon her) used to stay two days and two nights every nine days with her, for Sawdah gave up her turn to 'Aishah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) approved of this. However, the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not fast these ten days does not indicate that it is not preferred to observe fast on them, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have faced things which prevented him from fasting.

The virtues of doing good deeds in the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are indicated by the Hadith reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and recorded in the Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith of Al-Bukhary. Observing Sawm on them is a good deed and this indicates that it is desirable to fast them according to the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas as well as the other Hadith to the same effect. This Hadith supports the Hadith of Hafsah although it is Hadith Mudtarib. Supposedly, the Hadith of Hafsah is Sahih, sometimes the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to fast the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah and Hafsah was aware of this while `Aishah was not or she might have forgotten. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the opinion of your Eminence regarding the opinion of the one who says that Sawm in the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah is Bid`ah (innovation in religion)?

A: This is an ignorant person who should be taught. The Messenger (peace be upon him)

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ordered that good deed should be done in them and fasting is one of the good deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("There are no days during which the righteous action is so pleasing to Allah than these ten days (i.e. the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah)." They asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, not even Jihad in the Cause of Allah?" He (peace be upon him) replied: "Not even Jihad in the Cause of Allah, except in case one goes forth with his life and his property and does not return with either of it.") Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith.

Though it is not certain whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) fasted them or not, yet it should be relied on what the Prophet said because saying is much more significant than practice. When saying is accompanied by practice, this will affirm the Sunnah. The Sunnah of the Prophet are divided into saying, practice, and approving. Though each of them forms the Sunnah, the saying is the most significant and strong of them. Then, the practice comes next and then approval follows. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("There are no days during which the righteous action is so pleasing to Allah than these days.") By these days the Prophet means the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. Thus, if one fasts or gives to charity during them, one will be doing a great good. It is ordained during these days also to recite Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]"), and Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]") because he (peace be upon him) said: (There are no days that are greater before Allah or in which good deeds are more beloved to Him

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than these ten days, so recite a great deal of Tahlil, Takbir, and Tahmid during them.) May Allah grant us all success!

170- Voluntary acts are rewarded but when left no sin is recurred

Q: Sister Um Yusuf from Makkah Al-Mukarramah says: Is there a sin on the one who used to observe voluntary acts when leaving them? For example, during my pregnancy I ceased to fast on Mondays and Thursdays. Please give us a fatwa, may Allah reward you the best!

A: As for all voluntary acts such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, fasting three days of every month, observing Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer after sunrise), and offering Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units), their doer will receive the reward and the one who does not perform them will not be punished. Yet, it is ordained for the believer to regularly observe the stressed Sunan (supererogatory acts that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) because of their great reward and because these voluntary acts of worship amend what one missed in the obligations. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on breaking voluntary fast

Q: Is it permissible for one to break his voluntary Sawm (fast) whenever one wishes?

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A: Yes, it is permissible but it is better for him to complete fasting unless there is a necessity to break the fast, such as showing hospitality for a guest, due to sharp hotness or the like, because it is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through the Hadith narrated by `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) what proves what we have mentioned. May Allah grant us success!

172- Ruling on setting one's intention to observe Sawm then falling ill

Q: A man intended to fast in the whole month of Sha'ban, but during the month he fell ill which made him stop his Sawm (Fasting), although he had an intention of fasting in the entire of the month, will he receive the reward of this intention?

A: It is hoped that he receives the reward of this intention based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (When a servant (of Allah) falls ill or travels, the like of the good deeds they used to do when at home in good health is recorded for them.) (Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Actions depend upon intentions, and every person shall have but that which they have intended.)

The Night of Al-Qadr

173- The night of Al-Qadr is the best night

Q: On this great occasion of the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree), we hope from Your Eminence to lecture to Muslims concerning it.

A: The Night of Al-Qadr is the best of all nights. Allah sent down the Qur`an in it and told that it is better than one thousand months. It is blessed and in it every matter of ordainments is decreed. Allah said in the beginning of Surah-Al-Dukhkhan, (Hâ-Mîm. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân, and none but Allâh (Alone) knows their meanings].) (By the manifest Book (i.e. this Qur'ân that makes things clear).) (We sent it (this Qur'ân) down on a blessed night [(i.e. the night of Al-Qadr, Sûrah No. 97) in the month of Ramadân — the 9th month of the Islâmic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].) (Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments.) (As a Command (or this Qur'an or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers),) ((As) a Mercy from your Lord. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.) And He (Exalted be He) said, (Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'ân) down in the night of Al-Qadr (Decree)) (Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'ân) down in the night of Al-Qadr (Decree)) (The night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allâh in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months).) (Therein descend the angels and the Rûh [Jibrîl (Gabriel)] by Allâh's Permission with all Decrees) (there is Peace (and Goodness from Allâh to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn.) It is authentically reported that Allah's Messenger said, (Whoever observes night prayer during Ramadan, out of Iman (faith) and hoping for Allah's Reward,

their previous sins will be forgiven.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) During it, one can offer prayers, say Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) and supplications, recite the Qur'an and do other aspects of goodness.

The noble Surah-Al-Qadr refers to that good doing in it is better than the good deeds of thousand

months other than it. This is a great bounty and mercy from to His Slaves. Therefore, Muslims should glorify it and present different acts of worship during it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told that it occurs in the last ten nights of Ramadan, especially in the odd ones. He (peace and blessings be upon him), ﴾Look for it in the last ten (nights) of the month of Ramadan in the odd (nights).﴿

Moreover, the authentic Hadiths of the Prophet showed that this night can be any of the ten nights and is not restricted to certain night; it may be the night of twenty first or any of the odd nights. It may be the night of

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twenty seventh which is the most night likely to be the Night of Al-Qadr. However, it may come in the even nights. Therefore, it is better to observe prayer, Dhikr and supplication along the whole ten out of faith and hoping for Allah's Reward in order to secure to catch up with this night and require what Allah promised those who do so in this night. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to show more diligence in these days than in the first twenty nights. `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to exert himself in devotion during the last ten nights of Ramadan more than any other time. She said: Upon the advent of the (last) ten (nights of Ramadan), Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) used to keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awake his family and prepare himself to observe prayer (with more vigor). He (peace be upon him) used to practice I`tikaf (seclusion for worship in a mosque)mostly during them.﴿ Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) said, ﴾Indeed, in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad peace be upon him) you have a good example to follow﴿

Also, `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying, ﴾O Messenger of Allah, what should I say in the Night of Al-Qadr? The Messenger said, "Say, 'Allahumma Innaka `Fuww Tuhibbul-`Afw Fa`fu `Anny' (O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me.)﴿ The companions of Allah's Messenger and the Salaf (the righteous successors) glorified these ten days and observe during them different kinds of goodness.

Therefore, Muslims should follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his honorable companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and the Salaf of this

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nation. They should offer prayer, recite the Qur'an and Dhikr and observe different kinds of worship out of faith and hoping for Allah's Reward so that they require the forgiveness of Allah, the removal of sins and saving from Hell as a bounty and generosity from him. The Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet indicate that this great promise is attainable as well through avoiding major sins. Allah (Exalted be He) said, ﴾If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall expiate from you your (small) sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance (i.e. Paradise).﴿ Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ﴾The Five (Obligatory Daily) Prayers, and from (one) Friday Prayer to (the next) Friday Prayer, and from Ramadan to Ramadan, are expiations for whatever (sins committed) between them, provided that major sins are avoided.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih)

It is worthy of mentioning here that some Muslims may do their best in Ramadan and repent to Allah from the preceding sins and after the end of Ramadan return to the misdeeds which they used to have and this is a great danger.

The true Muslim should keep away from that and have a truthful intention to keep on the obedience of Allah and avoiding the sins. Allah (glory be to Him) said to His Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (i.e. death).﴿ And He (Exalted be He) said, ﴾O you who believe! Fear Allâh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He

has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islâm [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allâh)].》

《Verily, those who say: "Our Lord is Allâh (Alone)," and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): "Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!》《We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask.》《An entertainment from (Allâh), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.》 This Ayah (Qur'anic Verse) refers to that those who admitted that their Lord is Allah, believed in Him, devoted their worship to Him and keep on that, Angels will say to them upon death that shall be no fear on them nor shall they grieve and that their destiny is Paradise. This is the outcome of having faith in Him, keeping on obedience of Allah and avoiding sins and devoting worship to Him. There are many Ayahs that assure on this meaning and establish on the necessity of adherence to justice, keeping on it and abstaining from sins. An examples of this are the following Ayahs, 《And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqûn (the pious).》《And spend in the Cause of Allâh (i.e. Jihâd of all kinds) and do not throw yourselves into destruction (by not spending your wealth in the Cause of Allâh), and do good. Truly, Allâh loves Al-Muhsinûn (the good-doers).》《And those who, when they have committed Fâhishah (great sin as illegal sexual intercourse) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allâh and ask forgiveness for their sins; - and none can forgive sins but Allâh - and do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know.》《For such, the reward is Forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath (Paradise), wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers (who do righteous deeds according to Allâh's Orders).》

We pray to Allah to guide us and all Muslims in these nights and other nights to what pleases him and loves. We ask Him to protect all of us from the evils with ourselves and our misdeeds. He is the Most Generous.

Laylat-ul-Qadr is in the last ten nights of Ramadan

Q: Allah (may He be Praised) has given superiority to the blessed month of Ramadan over all other months, and to its last ten nights over the nights of the year, and to Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree) which is better than one thousand months. Is the date of Laylat-ul-Qadr fixed? Or does it occur in the last ten nights of Ramadan?

A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains that Laylat-ul-Qadr is in the last ten nights of Ramadan, specially on one of the odd numbered nights. He pointed out that whoever performs Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) during all these ten nights will gain its reward. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever performs Qiyam-ul-Layl

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on Laylat Al-Qadr during Ramadan out of faith and seeking reward from Allah, his previous sins will be forgiven.﴿ It means that whoever offers many acts of worship like Salah (Prayer), recitation of the Qur'an and Sadaqah (voluntary charity), and perform other good deeds during this night out of faith and seeking the reward from Allah away from showing off or seeking worldly desires, Allah will forgive his previous sins.

According to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), this will happen only when the major sins are shunned, for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾The five (daily) prayers, and from one Friday prayer to the (next) Friday prayer, and from Ramadan to Ramadan are expiations for the (sins) committed in between (their intervals) provided that major sins are avoided.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih) May Allah grant all Muslims everywhere success to perform Qiyam-ul-Layl during this night out of faith and seeking the reward from Allah, for He is the Most Generous and Most Gracious.

175. Signs of Laylat-ul-Qadr

Q. What are the signs of Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree), and what should the Muslim do during it?

A. It is recommended to offer Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) on Laylat-ul-Qadr knowing that it is confined to the last ten days

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of Ramadan, more probably on the odd nights. It is most likely the ninety sixth night. However, it is recommended that one be diligent in performing acts of worship during days and nights of the last ten days of Ramadan. Actually, Qiyam-ul-Layl is not obligatory. Rather, it is only recommended because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to be more diligent in performing acts of worship in those last ten days than in any other days. `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴾With the start of the last ten days (of Ramadan), the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to tighten his waist belt (to observe Prayer with more vigor), offer Prayer all the night and keep his family awake for Prayer.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Whoever performs Qiyam-ul-Layl on Laylat-ul-Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, all his previous sins will be forgiven.﴿ There are many other Hadiths to the same effect. May Allah grant us success!

176- Laylat-ul-Qadr can be seen with the naked eye

Can Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree) be seen with the naked unaided human eye? Some people say that if a person can see Laylat-ul-Qadr, he sees a light in the sky and so on.

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How did the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) see it? How can a person know that he has seen Laylat-ul-Qadr? Will a person still gain its reward even if he could not see that light? Please explain providing evidence.

A: Laylat-ul-Qadr may be seen with the naked eye by one whom Allah helps to see it through seeing its signs. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to recognize it by its signs. However, not seeing signs does not necessarily mean that one who spends that night performing Salah (prayer) out of faith and hoping reward will not gain its reward. A Muslim should strive to seek it in the last ten nights of Ramadan as the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his Companions to do so hoping reward. Thus, a person whose spending this night in Salah coincides with firm faith and seeking reward will gain its reward, even if he does not recognize it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Whoever offers Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night on Laylat-ul-Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, all his previous sins will be forgiven.) (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.) According to another narration elsewhere: (Whoever observes optional night prayer wishing that night is Laylat-ul-Qadr then it is, all his past and future sins will be forgiven.)

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Actually, there is an authentically reported Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect that the sign of Laylat-ul-Qadr is that the sun rises on the following morning with no visible rays. Moreover, Ubay Ibn Ka`b used to swear that it was the twenty-sixth night, citing this sign as evidence. However, the sound view is that it moves through all the last ten nights, but it is more probable one of the odd nights and most likely the twenty-sixth night. Thus, whoever is diligent in acts of worship, such as offering Salah, reciting the Qur'an, making Du`a (supplication) and other kinds of good deeds will undoubtedly catch up with Laylat-ul-Qadr and attain what Allah has promised those who do that out of faith and seeking reward. May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

I`tikaf

177. Definition, objective and other rulings relating to I`tikaf

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the reverend brother, may Allah guide him to good. Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your letter containing your following question:

Q. What is the ruling on I`tikaf? What is its Shar`y (Islamic legal) definition? Does it include sleeping and eating in the Masjid (mosque), and is doing so permissible?

A. Undoubtedly, I`tikaf (seclusion for worship in a Masjid) is an act of worship that brings one closer to Allah. It is better performed in Ramadan than in any other month, since Allah (Exalted be He) said: ﴾And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikâf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques.﴿ Besides, the Prophet (peace be

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upon him) ﴾used to observe I`tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan. Once he abandoned it (I`tikaf in Ramadan) and practiced it in Shawwal.﴿ The objective of I`tikaf is that people devote themselves to worship and stay in seclusion with Allah, which is the Shar`y seclusion. Some scholars gave the following definition of I`tikaf: Cutting all ties with creatures to maintain only ties of worship with the Creator. This means giving up all activities that might divert from obedience and worship of Allah. It is permissible to observe it in Ramadan as well as in other months, as is stated above. However, it is better performed accompanied by fasting. Anyway, it is unobjectionable to observe I`tikaf without fasting according to the sound of two opinions given by scholars. In this regard, it is authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: ﴾"O Messenger of Allah, I vowed to perform I`tikaf one night in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (knowing that it was before he embraced Islam)". The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Fulfill your vow"﴿ .

It is well-known that one may fast during day but not during night. Moreover, it is unobjectionable to sleep or eat in a Masjid either by a person observing I`tikaf or otherwise. This is based on many Hadiths and traditions to this effect and on others describing the state of Ahl-ul-Suffah (poor people who lived on people's charity). However, cleanness of the Masjid and caution against things that might dirty it, such as remnants of food, have to be taken into consideration. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I was shown the rewards of my Ummah (for their different deeds),

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even a speck of dirt that someone removes from the Masjid.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhy, and is judged to be authentic by Ibn Khuzaymah). Likewise, on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reported to have ﴾commanded the building of Masjids in different localities and that they should be kept clean and be perfumed﴿ . (Related by the Five Compilers of Hadith (Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah) through a good chain of narrators). Different localities here refer to the different districts and tribes located in cities.

I ask Allah to guide us and you to acquire beneficial knowledge and to act thereupon and to reform our hearts and deeds, for He is All-Hearing and Ever-Near. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

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178. The ruling on I`tikaf and what should those observing I`tikaf do? And the ruling on stipulating fast for them?

Q. What is I`tikaf? And if a person wants to observe I`tikaf, what should they do and what should they not do? Is it permissible for woman to observe I`tikaf in Al-Masjid Al-Haram? How should this be done?

A. I`tikaf (i.e. confining oneself in a Masjid for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) is `Ibadah (worship) and Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet). It is best to be practiced in Ramadan in any Masjid (mosque) where congregational Salah (Prayer) is offered. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikâf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques.﴿ There is nothing wrong in observing I`tikaf in Al-Masjid Al-Haram and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah) by either men or women, in case this does not entail harm for people offering Salah. The one who observes I`tikaf should keep to the place of their I`tikaf and Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), and should not go out except for answering the call of nature or for bringing food, if there is no one to provide it for them. For, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to go out to meet his needs. It is not permissible for a woman to let her husband come to her when she is observing I`tikaf. Likewise, it is not permissible for a man I`tikaf to have his wife with him while he is

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performing I`tikaf, since Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikâf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques.﴿ It is better for the one who observes I`tikaf not to talk much with people. Rather, they should keep to `Ibadah and obedience. However, if a man is visited by some of his brothers or a woman is visited by some of her Mahrams (unmarriageable relatives) or Muslim sisters and has talks with them, there is nothing wrong in that. ﴾The Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives used to visit him while he was observing I`tikaf, talk to him and then leave.﴿ This indicates that there is nothing wrong in it.

I`tikaf means staying at the Masjid for worship of Allah (Exalted be He), whether for a long or a short period. As far as I know, nothing is reported regarding assigning a certain day, two or more for I`tikaf. It is an ordained `Ibadah, unless someone vows to make it as then it becomes obligatory. It could be observed by man or woman alike. It is not a condition to observe Sawm (Fast) during it, according to the correct opinion. Thus, if a man or a woman observe I`tikaf while they are not observing fast, then there is no harm in observing I`tikaf at anytime other than Ramadan.

179. The time and place of I`tikaf and the ruling on interrupting it

Q. What is the ruling on I`tikaf (seclusion for worship in a Masjid) for men and women? Should one who observes I`tikaf be fast? What should be done during I`tikaf? When should one begin and end I`tikaf?

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A. I`tikaf is an act of Sunnah for both men and women. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to observe I`tikaf during Ramadan, and finally he settled on I`tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan. Some of his wives used to observe I`tikaf with him, and they observed I`tikaf after he (peace be upon him) passed away. I`tikaf should take place in the Masjids (mosques) where congregational Salah is performed. If the days of I`tikaf include a Friday, it is best to observe it in Al-Masjid Al-Jami` (the large Masjid where Jumu`ah [Friday] Prayers are held), if possible.

According to the soundest views of scholars, there is no specific time for I`tikaf and it is not conditional to observe Sawm (fast) during it, though it is better to fast then. According to the Sunnah, I`tikaf begins with one having the intention to observe it and it ends when the period intended ends. It is permissible for a person to interrupt I`tikaf when necessary, since it is an act of Sunnah, and it is not obligatory unless one vows to observe it. Besides, it is desirable to observe I`tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan, following the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Then, it is also desirable to begin I`tikaf after the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer of the twenty-first day, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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Moreover, the period of I`tikaf ends when the ten days of Ramamdan are over. A person who observes I`tikaf is not to be blamed if they end it before the intended time, unless it is vowed. It is also preferable for a person to choose a special place in the Masjid for rest. It is recommended to frequently maintain Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), recital of the Qur'an, seeking forgiveness from Allah, making Du`a' (supplications), and offering Salah at times when it is not forbidden. There is no harm if one observing I`tikaf has their friends visit and talk to them. Some of the mothers of the believers used to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him) and talk to him while he was observing I`tikaf. Once, he was visited by Safiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) while he was observing I`tikaf during Ramadan, and he (peace be upon him) then walked her to the door after her visit. This shows that there is no harm in visiting those who observe I`tikaf. The act of the Prophet (peace be upon him) shows his perfect modesty and his good manner with his wives.

May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, Companions and those who uprightly follow him.

180. I`tikaf is valid in (Masjids) other than the Three Masjids

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, may Allah protect him.

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your question registered in the Department of Scientific Researches and Ifta', No. 4886, dated Shawwal 24, 1408 A.H., in which you ask about a number of issues, including the following:

Q. What is the degree of authenticity of the Hadith: (There should be no I`tikaf (seclusion for worship in a Masjid) except in the Three Masjids (mosques)) **If it is authentic, does it actually mean that there should be no I`tikaf except in the Three Masjids (i.e., the Sacred, Prophet's, and Al-Aqsa)?**

A. It is valid to observe I`tikaf in any Masjid other than the Three Masjids, on condition that congregational Salah (Prayer) is established therein. For, if this condition is not fulfilled, it becomes invalid to observe I`tikaf there.

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However, this does not apply if a person vows to observe I`tikaf in any of the Three Masjids, for they are then obliged to fulfill their vow. May Allah guide us all to do what pleases Him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!).

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

181. The ruling on discontinuing I`tikaf to perform 'Umrah

Q. What is the ruling on someone performing I`tikaf (seclusion for worship in a Masjid) wants to (discontinue I`tikaf to) perform `Umrah on behalf of his father?

A. If he has vowed to remain in I`tikaf for a fixed period of time, he must complete this period. It is incumbent upon the person to fulfill vows made to do something good. On the other hand, if his I`tikaf is voluntary, one is free to complete or discontinue it to perform `Umrah.

182. If committed in a sacred place or time, sins are multiplied in terms of quality, not quantity

Q. Does fasting constitute expiation for both minor and major sins committed by a Muslim ? Is the sin of an evil action committed in Ramadan augmented?

A. What is prescribed for the Muslim in Ramadan, and in other times, is to strive against his self that is inclined towards evil until it becomes tranquil and inclined towards goodness.

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Muslims must fight against the enemy of Allah Iblis (Satan), until they are safe from his evil and his whispers. In this world, the Muslims are thus engaged in a great, ongoing struggle against their selves, their desires, and the Shaytan. Therefore, they must repent often and pray for forgiveness at all times. However, times vary one from another. So, Ramadan is the best month of the year, for it is the month of forgiveness, mercy, and salvation from the Fire. If the month is special and the place is special, the rewards for good deeds performed therein are multiplied and the rewards for misdeeds are also multiplied. An evil deed done in Ramadan is more heinous than one done at any other time, just as an act of worship done in Ramadan brings a greater reward from Allah than one done at any other time. This is because Ramadan has such a great status, an act of worship done during this month is especially rewarding and its reward is greatly multiplied, while a sin committed during this month is worse and more grievous than a sin committed at any other time. Hence, the Muslim has to make the most of this blessed month by performing acts of worship and righteous deeds, and refraining from bad deeds, so that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) bless him by accepting his good deeds and help him remain steadfast in adhering to the truth. But a bad deed receives only one reward for it and is not multiplied in terms of quantity, either in Ramadan or at other times. On the other hand, the reward for a good deed may be multiplied tenfold or more. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states in Surat Al-An`am: ﴿Whoever brings a good deed (Islâmic Monotheism and deeds of obedience to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit, and whoever brings an evil deed (polytheism, disbelief, hypocrisy, and deeds of disobedience to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) shall have only the recompense of the like thereof, and they will not be wronged.﴾ There are

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many Qur'anic verses in this regard. Similarly in special places, such as Al-Haramayn Al-Sharifayn (the Two Sacred Precincts, i.e. in Makkah and Madinah), deeds are multiplied greatly in quantity and quality, while evil deeds are multiplied in quality, but not in quantity, when done at special times or in special places, as is referred to above. May Allah grant us success!

183. The Multiplying of good deeds in Makkah

Q. What is the virtue of getting accustomed to observing the fast Ramadan in Makkah Al-Mukarramah? Does it involve a special merit for those outside it?

A. Undoubtedly, Makkah Al-Mukarramah is the best place on earth. Thus, prayer performed in Al-Masjid Al-Haram is one hundred thousand times better than a prayer performed anywhere else. Verily, the reward of good deeds done in Al-Haramayn Al-Sharifayn is multiplied to an extent known by Almighty Allah Alone. An exception to this is prayer, as the multiplication of its reward is precisely defined in the Sunnah. As for fasting Ramadan in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, it combines both the virtue of the time and the virtue of the place. So, if a Muslim is blessed to fast Ramadan in Makkah Al-Mukarramah and their observing the fast then does not involve preventing them from fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, the reward of their fast, especially when maintained by sincere intention, will be immense indeed.

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However, if being outside Al-Haram brings greater spiritual benefits for the Muslim, then it is best to stay at the place where they can benefit others in a better way and perform more righteous deeds.

184. The ruling on devoting oneself to worship in Ramadan

Q. Is it an act of Sunnah to devote oneself in Ramadan to performance of good deeds and worship act and having rest?

A. All of a Muslims' deeds are considered worship. The duties that they fulfill in good and sincere intention are acts of worship. Worship is not only Prayer and Fasting; it takes on countless other forms. Seeking knowledge and teaching it, calling others to Allah, raising and caring for one's children and carrying out household duties, being kind to people and exerting effort to help them and relieve their distresses, engaging in any permissible work that is beneficial to people, and seeking lawful sustenance are all acts of worship to Allah (Exalted be He). This is so provided that one's intention is good and sincere. The Muslim whom Allah (Exalted be He) enables to combine these personal and general acts of worship has indeed attained immense good. Likewise, doing the job assigned to a person in sincerity

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is a part of the acts of worship rewarded by Allah (Exalted be He). However, if some persons restricts themselves to private worship due to their inability to engage in any other type of worship, there is still great good in what they are doing, if it is done purely for the Sake of Allah. It happened twice that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was engaged in Jihad during Ramadan. The Battle of Badr took place on the seventeenth day of Ramadan in the second year after Hijrah, while the Conquest of Makkah was in Ramadan in the eighth year after Hijrah. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) traveled during Ramadan and broke the Fast upon perceiving that those fasting people accompanying him in the travel had been suffering hardship. Simply put, a Muslim should be diligent in performing good deeds in Ramadan and should not idly waste time in this blessed month in sleep, heedlessness or other distractions.